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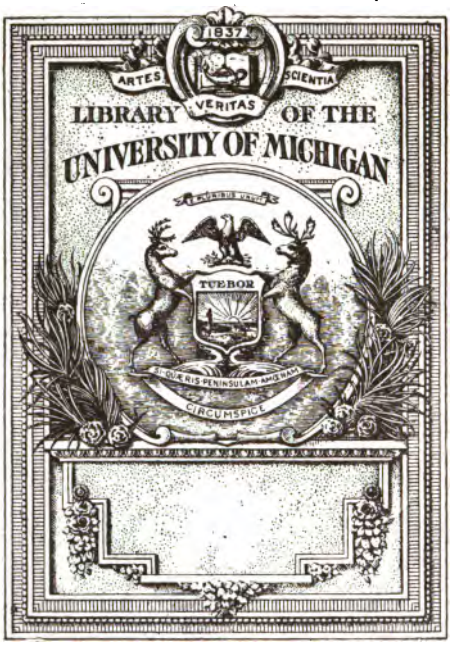
TO ARMS !

(LA VEILLÉE DES ARMES)

MARCELLE TINAYRE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TO ARMS!

TO ARMS!

(LA VEILLÉE DES ARMES)

AN IMPRESSION OF THE SPIRIT OF FRANCE

AUTHORIZED TRANSLATION FROM THE FRENCH OF

MARCELLE TINAYRE

BY

LUCY H. HUMPHREY

WITH A PREFACE BY

JOHN H. FINLEY

NEW YORK

E. P. DUTTON & COMPANY

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DEDICATION

TO

CHARLES AND MARIE-LOUISE LE VERRIER

MY friends, I offer you this book, a mirror where everyday and heroic aspects are reflected, of a Paris we shall never see again. During the days preceding the mobilization, we have watched together the shadow of the war climbing the pacific sky, and blacker, hour by hour, extend over our land. With our dearest friends, to-day widely scattered, we have known the agony, religious emotion, inward exaltation, the will to sacrifice and the sorrow of parting, in those unforgetable moments when our spirits were only part of the universal spirit, when our personal affections melted into a universal feeling, when the weakest among us felt beating in his mortal heart the eternal heart of France.

Then, we had the sense of kinship which bound us to the people of our race; laborers, bourgeois, artists, scholars, the greatest as well as the humblest. The obscure,—elbowed only recently, with indifference, in an egoistic security, seemed

to us, in the face of the common peril, what they are in reality, our brothers and sisters, our own people. There were no more social distinctions nor false convenances: by a word, by a look, by thoughtful silence, we all fraternized.

The most ordinary street, with those who lived in it and those who walked through it, became a marvellous school of grace and courage. I have always loved this street in Paris, but I have never really seen it and understood it until these days; and it is in a way under the dictation of the passers-by that I have written its history—a history which occupied forty-eight hours: from July 31st to August 2nd, 1914.

None of my books have required less imagination or admitted of less literary artifice. I offer it to you, my friends, because you will be better able than anyone to recognise in it the true color and the exact meaning I have tried to give. It is for you, whose home made me welcome and happy; but it belongs also to those whom your fraternal love joins in the same memory, to those who kept vigil with you, with me, on "the eve of the war" and who are now at their distant posts: Philippe Millet in the North and Noel Pinelli at the Dardanelles.

Let us take their beloved names, associated with yours, to be a happy omen for the destiny of this little book, which bears our prayers and our hopes that we may be celebrating their return before long the day after victory.

PREFACE

It was said by a correspondent in Paris at the beginning of the war that in France they no longer remembered the days of the week or of the month but reckoned time from the first day of mobilisation. I saw the awesome and ominous *affiche* ("the placard which, with its crossed flags and black letters, became a sign-post at the crossroads of two epochs") which established the new calendar of days that have run into months, of months that have run into years and of years that will run into centuries of a new life for the valorous France which has been revealed to the world since that day of mobilisation; and having myself walked through northern France in those first historic days, and having seen the men on their way to the places of rendezvous and the women in the fields gathering the first harvests, I am able to know with what quiet courage and intrepid heart France began the new and undreamed epoch in her life.

And how dearly she must ever cherish the memories of those hours of brave, unquestioning response on the part of the men and of as brave, uncomplaining relinquishment on the part of the women. It was, technically, a passing from a peace footing to a war footing; but it was spiritually the sudden forgetting of self in the love of a nation-mother and in the defence of the liberties sweet to mankind.

In this little book one will find in the visualisation of the typical incidents of those hours (when the rounds of "accustomed rites" in home and street and shop seemed to make any break with the past impossible) the spirit of those now memorable days—days which we of America bring into our own calendar, now that the sun is shining on the bayonets of our own brothers and lovers in France not far from where it shone on those of the men in sky-blue who lie many of them out in the valleys of the Marne and the Meurthe, of the Meuse and the Somme, beloved of the skies but proudly held by the soil of France.

I had been in France not a week before this un-

anticipated mobilisation, in the midst of the trial "which concealed France from strangers, spectators also" and which had for the French "obscured Europe." But when I returned in this next fateful week the real France could not be concealed, for her people stood all unconscious of stranger or spectator, holding "close together, heart to heart, hand to hand, in silence turning their faces in the same direction." And one may safely quote and apply to all France the statement within that there was "no brutality in the ardour burning in their blood." I remember particularly, though not as exceptional, the Frenchman with whom I journeyed from London to Folkstone and then to Boulogne as one of those first nights. He had closed his little shop, left his all, to join the colors somewhere out in the north of France, placidly, unboastfully, fearlessly determined, yet hoping that it "would not come to bayonets," the brutal bayonets.

As one passes from the early chapters of this book, with their petty, homely incidents and their simple dialogue, at times quarrelsome and not the

most agreeable to puritanical ears,—passes from these to the later chapters, sees all France moved by tenderness, and brought suddenly, but not by any mechanistic compulsion, into one great family, sees "selfishness melted in the pure flame of universal sacrifice," one can hardly regret, despite the bloody cost and the tragic folly of war, that France was called to this *Veillée des Armes* in a cause that exalts its every defender. If there are tears in her "resigned eyes" they are "shining with light."

JOHN FINLEY.

TO ARMS!

TO ARMS!

I

IT is the 31st of July in Paris. A heavy morning, sunny but threatening a storm.

The street, situated in a district of the left bank, recalls lithographs made under Louis-Phillipe. Quite short, extending above the gardens of an expropriated convent, it leads from a quiet circular *Place*, to a large populous avenue. Near the *Place* are small grey or brown houses, pavilions with railings and little gardens and a long, low wall, disfigured with advertisements, which passes the bell-tower of a chapel and the heavy green masses of old chestnut trees. The narrow sidewalks, the wide pavement, the little shops, this square with its three trees and its benches, is the Paris of 1840, the Paris of Balzac and of Murger. The wine-shop displaying the sign, "To

the Shell"—souvenir of the siege—has replaced one of the public houses where Rodolphe and Mimi danced. On the other hand, near the avenue, the street is dignified by five new houses higher than the others, and dazzlingly white in the light. They are the advance guard of new Paris: proclaiming their aggressive modernity they dominate the pavilions and the gardens which from year to year are disappearing.

Tiny fragment of the great city, the little street is self-existent. It has its own physiognomy and special character. The Parisians of L'Étoile or of Parc Monceau ignore it. If they should come to know it, without doubt they would despise it. However, it is part of Paris, by a juster claim than those splendid highways, because it is inhabited by bourgeois Parisians, who, from father to son, are faithful to their district, if not to their apartments, and it is not frequented by strangers. Artisans, men of independent means, small officials, tradesmen, they retain the habits and prejudices of their caste. Here, as in the country, life is narrow, economical and petty.

Neighbors know each other at least by name. The carpenter and the locksmith pride themselves on the perfection of their work in wood and iron. They have their professional honor. They are of the race of artisans. A sort of popular élite that does not frequent low taverns—in touch with the poor and intelligent class of young artists, of students, and developing unconsciously by the contact. The charming, well-dressed girls seem like ladies compared with their mothers in loose jackets. Yes, it is certainly Paris, although not visited by tourists, nor suspected by the moralists of the outside world. Beyond, in the neighborhood of the little street are the swarming districts, the museums, the schools, century-old monuments, the theatres and amusement halls, the splendid parks, the suburbs, bristling with factories. The little street realises all this impressive life, existing around its humility. It participates modestly; it receives the current that comes from the centre by the neighboring avenue; it shakes with the passing of trams and autobuses, and the deep arteries of the underground

railway vibrate in its calcareous soil. Modern activity is encroaching upon it, but something of the past dwells in it, a quiet and pleasant calm, an air of good fellowship and of naïveté.

This morning is like all other mornings and the little street has its usual aspect. On one side the sun warms the downy mists that soon become ragged and melt away, and on the other, a soft ray touches the chalky whiteness of the façades of the tall houses. The doves that live in the bell-tower gently coo, while quantities of sparrows twitter among the thick leaves of the chestnut trees. The masons take a drop at the wine-merchant's; Monsieur Gouge, the grocer, opens the blinds of his shop. The creamery is open, also the newsstand and Madame Anselme's stationery store. A porter goes by. Janitors throw streams of water broadcast on the pavement and announce, one to another, that the day will be hot and that there is a storm in the air.

Some employées and workmen, who hurry towards the subway station, stop a minute to look

at the posters displayed on the fences. There are the old ones, left from the elections, which have been disintegrating since the month of May. It is possible to distinguish words in large letters, phrases still readable . . . "militarist reaction . . . electoral reform . . . bourgeois parties . . . income tax . . . monarchical traditions . . . three years' law . . . two years' law . . . substitute soldiers . . . robber . . . bigot . . . unpatriotic . . . tool of the Lodges." The passers-by cast an absentminded glance on the field of battle of political parties, on this débris of rhetoric, which the sun and showers are slowly destroying. These are the thoughts of yesterday—already so old that they die and decompose.

A new poster, that a hostile hand has more than half torn away, announces a *Meeting of Protestation against the War.* Two men, a worker and a bourgeois, read it, looking at each other with a kind of silent defiance and then go on, each to his own work.

Meanwhile, at the corner of the avenue, the attractive shop "Vert d'eau" of the florist is

opened. A blonde woman, in a violet house-dress, peeps out, as if she were waiting for some one. Madame Anselme, the stationer, busy arranging the illustrated magazines, watches the movements of the æsthetic shopkeeper and shrugs her shoulders with scorn.

It is a morning like all other mornings. In the rooms of the houses, each human group, couple or family, accomplishes its accustomed rites. Everywhere the fire is lighted, the water runs, the curtains are raised, the light streams in, the cradle creaks and rocks and the woman smiles to the mirror. Everywhere, the peaceful security, the chain of thoughts and acts and the rhythm of life are renewed, joining yesterday to to-morrow in so regular a way that it all seems unbreakable.

II

"HAVE you change for fifty francs, Madame?"

"For three newspapers at one sou? I would rather give you credit."

"Here then are three sous."

"Ah!" responds Madame Anselme, smiling. "Exactly the sum . . ."

The chance customer apologises:

"It has been difficult since yesterday, to get this wretched change! There is nothing but gold which is very scarce. One hundred sou pieces have disappeared. . . . But why?"

"It is the fault of the government," replies Madame Anselme positively. "They should have foreseen it. But it is said that the money will reappear. Don't be afraid."

"Meanwhile, on the boulevard yesterday, the cafés refused notes of one hundred francs. Yes, Madame, with one hundred francs in one's pocket, it was impossible to dine! . . ."

Madame Anselme, large, blonde, showy, in the full development of forty, does not lose her usual serenity. She slightly shrugs her beautiful shoulders.

"Yes, but why do you suppose? Because the newspapers excite the public. Then the people rush to the banks to withdraw their savings and to the grocers to buy provisions. It is all arranged and there are speculators who profit by it . . . like this Monsieur Gouge opposite, who has raised the price of tapioca. And you, my little lady, what is it that you wish? Change for one hundred francs? I haven't it."

A stenographer, twenty years old, pale and frizzed under a little hat wreathed with tiny green apples, replies straightforwardly,

"One hundred francs? Where could I get them? Who has one hundred francs this 31st of the month before pay day? I shall have a beautiful bank-note this evening, but at seven in the morning I have only 35 sous. Give me the *Mode Parisienne.* I can pay for that."

"The edition at two sous, without a pattern?"

"Oh! I want the pattern."

"Very well, it is three sous."

The stenographer takes the journal and before going, looks at the illustrated magazines too costly for her purse, which are the greatest ornament of the stock. The colored covers represent ladies with long, thin figures, less clothed than disguised, according to the Russo-Persian fashion of the year 1914. The faces of these persons are formed by a stroke of the pen, making an oval —two black spots for the eyes, a round rosy dab for the mouth—and they have such small noses that they appear to have none at all. As for their bodies, they are like dancing serpents and they bend, stomach forward, chest hollowed, for an eternal tango. The egg-plant and the tomato, the canary and English turf add their stronger colors to the waving scarfs which float on the violet, green or blue locks of the ladies. Parisiennes of music-hall and of cosmopolitan palaces, they give to a simple stranger an incorrect idea of true Parisiennes. The stenographer, Madame Anselme, and all the readers of maga-

zines who are born between Montrouge and the Batingnolles, understand themselves in regard to this matter. . . . They admire the eccentric pictures as a fantasie of artists and dressmakers, but they are not deceived by them.

Under the magazines are some pieces of music, maxixes and tangos, crazes of the past winter, and Viennese waltzes, remarkable for the stupidity of the words. Further down are bargain volumes, where the ridiculous and sublime are close neighbors. *Rocambole* and *Les Misérables*, *Les Nuits du Boulevard* and *Manon Lescaut*, detective novels and the great classics. In the same way, the coarse little comic journals are found among numbers of *La Vie Parisienne*, *Le Rire* and the *Cri de Paris*. Easy sentimentality, rough soldier songs, lyrics, supreme delicacy of irony or emotion, heroism and frivolity, pamphlet and romance, the whole soul of Paris, with its beauty and its blemishes, appears in miniature in this stationer's window on the outskirts of town.

"*L'Humanité!* . . ."

"*Le Matin* . . ."

"*Le Journal* . . ."

"*La Guerre Sociale*. . . . Have you the change?"

"For twenty sous?"

"For five francs."

"There!"

Clients take the paper they wish from the pile and go, one by one, struggling with the double sheets that startle them. And, although Madame Anselme cannot see their faces, she knows from their slower, heavy gait that a weight has fallen upon them.

Others stop, so anxious to read that they forget to pay and hold the sou in their hand. Then they seem to rouse themselves, throw the sou on the tray and go in turn, in silence. . . .

An old man says in a loud voice:

"My God! Suppose that we should see it again!"

He goes on, with the thought that makes him almost reel and nearly blinds the weary eyes of the poor devil. . . . Meanwhile, the stenographer, ten steps ahead of him, enjoys her fashion

paper. The children play. Two cats defy each other, spitting, and behind the fence of the lumber-yard a mason's assistant eggs them on. . . .

"Kss! Kss! . . . the kitty-cats! . . . There is some game for the siege!"

A mason protests:

"For what? . . . For what? . . . The siege? We are not in '70 and the proletariat is there to act. Must we go into a terrible war for Servia, when we don't even know where it is, Servia? It wouldn't be human. It wouldn't be civilised! It is certain that we are French first of all, and we will not let it bother us, but if the C. G. T.[1] holds great meetings in all the cities, in Paris, in London, in Berlin to declare, "The working-man wishes justice; he wants them to explain their difficulties nicely to each other, instead of breaking their neighbor's jaws. Don't you think that would make the governments reflect?"

The chorus of comrades responds with approving grunts or ironic laughter.

[1] Confédération Générale du Travail.

"Meetings! they never did anything but give pleasure to the busy-bodies!"

"It is for the German Socialists to begin. . . . Listen: is it their government or ours that wishes to play the villain? It is certainly not ours. . . ."

"Just hear. It is not ended yet. They will not come forward, the German comrades. . . ."

"They will come forward!"

"They will not!"

"Ask Jaurès. . . ."

"They will not come forward. They are Socialists, but they are Boches. . . . I have known them, the Boches. . . . We cannot trust them. . . . They are the worst traitors. My good man, they would inform against their own pals, like the monkeys! . . . All spies and impostors! . . . There is nothing more to be done. . . . As for me, I have ordered my army shoes. I am in the engineering corps."

"I am in the artillery. And you, Ernesse?"

"Infantry soldier of the first class. . . . I start on the fourth day. . . ."

Madame Anselme, who hears this dialogue, presses her lips together with a disapproving air. She doesn't like workmen who talk politics with the phrases of the public meeting and words that she does not understand. This paper-seller is an ambitious woman who dreams of raising herself in the social scale. Her trade seems much nobler to her than that of the woman who sells fruit, and because she handles books and journals, she assumes the manners and pretensions of an educated person. A poor widow, Madame Anselme has practised the sharpest economy in order to procure for her child the fine education she wanted for herself, and, born of the people, she has hoped that her son might become a bourgeois. Pierre was a student in college; he entered the highest training school with good standing and he is about to pass the examination for the licentiate's degree. At the beginning of October, he will be a professor in the country. Then, Madame Anselme will sell her paper business and grow old near her son, happy, honored and comfortable like an independent lady.

In order to be worthy of this glorious future, so that her son may never blush on her account, Madame Anselme has cultivated herself; she has become almost distinguished and elegant, with her Parisian capacity for assimilation. Still desirable and attractive as ripe fruit, she has ignored the temptations that disturb the autumn of beautiful women and has not listened to any proposition of marriage. She is passionately, blindly a mother and in this same hour when a strange disquietude troubles the French spirit, Madame Anselme is indifferent to the conflicts of Austria and Servia, incapable of realising the meaning and the consequences, and continues hypnotised by the examination for the licentiate's degree and the probable success of her son. Pierre has said to her: "Be calm." She is calm. The people rushing to Monsieur Gouge for provisions seem to her ridiculous and pitiable and she blames the government that cannot prevent the money panic.

"Ah! good morning, Marie! You want change for one hundred francs?"

"If I had one hundred francs at a time,

Madame Anselme, it would be on my savings book! . . ."

Marie Pourat is from Aveyron, swarthy, very thin, as sharp in business as she is in regard to money, and robust, in spite of her slender waist, her arms like iron wire and her dark little face like a poor insect. She was a servant for a restaurant keeper of the Avenue du Maine until her twenty-eighth year, then, having amassed a capital of 2000 francs, she married one of her compatriots, Anthime Pourat, an enormous red-haired plumber, who treats her somewhat roughly and secretly dreads her. They occupy two rooms on the sixth floor in a neighboring street. Marie holds the purse, brings up two little boys with stern solicitude and endures with good grace the presence of her old peasant mother-in-law. Her lordly spouse allows her to govern the menage and invests the money which she saves by scrimping like the ants. Sometimes, having imbibed a little too much, he shouts at the top of his lungs,

"I am the master! It is for the man to com-

mand! I cannot allow people to say that the wife wears the trousers at Anthime Pourat's."

Marie does not contradict him, and this assertion of authority, wholly theoretic, satisfies the affable tyrant.

Madame Anselme and Marie are like each other in their intense maternal passion and in the same wish to advance their offspring in the world. One wants to be the mother of a scholar; the other, uprooted from her own country, hopes to return to her native Aveyron and to cultivate a little place, after having made post office employées or travelling workmen of her children, men of sure pay and certain support for old age. Both have the same terror of risk and improvidence.

"You look tired, Marie. It is the heat. . . . And then, you do too much. . . . One hour with Monsieur Gouge, scrubbing the stairs. That is not a woman's work!—the menage of Madame Davesnes, and Madame Moriceau's and the errands and washing days."

"If one has chicks one must earn money, you poor thing!" replies Marie, who has kept the col-

loquialisms of her province and also a slight accent. . . . "Plumbing doesn't get on very well. But if I could do without him, I should not go to Monsieur Gouge any more. He is not just, that man. . . . Since he has seen the fine grocer settled on the Avenue, in the beautiful shop where they sell fish and game, his blood is turned with jealousy. . . . Yesterday, Madamoiselle Cousance's servant wanted to buy some petrol: 'Not more than a litre,' he said, 'and I shall charge an extra sou. If you are not satisfied, go to your grand place . . . stand in line. . . .' And to me, Madame, who am in his employ, he sold four packages of old macaroni at the price of the extra superfine. . . ."

"You are laying in provisions!"

"Eh! poor woman, almost all the world is doing it! . . . Suppose we should begin to lack things. . . ."

"My son has forbidden me to buy even a kilo of sugar in advance. He says that Paris is sure of plenty of provisions and that the lines before the stores only demoralize the people and excite the

merchants who want to grow richer and richer. . . . Here, Marie, take your papers. . . . Here is your package: *Le Journal* and *Le Figaro* for Madame Davesnes, *Les Annales* and *Le Matin* for Mademoiselle Cousance, and *La Libre Parole* for Madame Moriceau. . . ."

"She is a happy person! Her son arrived yesterday. . . ."

"The Abbé Moriceau?"

"Yes. . . . A short blond, quite sweet and so polite! The kind of seminarist that seems like a young lady dressed as a curé. I should never venture to confess to a little young thing like that. . . . What will my Anthime say who does not love a priest!"

"It didn't prevent your Anthime from being married in the church?"

"Certainly not! One does what is necessary, one is not a dog. . . . I am not religious, but I respect custom. . . . Moreover, the other day, Monsieur Lepoultre was perfectly astonished because I sent my Eugène to the little catechism class. . . . I said to him: If it doesn't do him any

good, it will do him no harm; a little religion is good for children. . . . Never mind whether it lasts. . . . But for a time it may have some influence. . . . And then why not? We are not dogs! . . ."

"Here are the papers for Monsieur Lepoultre: *L'Action*, *L'Humanité* and for the sculptor, *La Guerre Sociale*."

"Pourat prefers *Le Petit Journal*. He explains to me what is in it, because I read the supplement and that satisfies me. . . . Ah! the poor woman tormented by politicians for a long time, my Anthime! . . . 'Much better if it were ended! They will acquit her! They will not acquit her! The judges are bought! The husband paid by Germany!' Ah! Each one puts in his oar. Now it is another song. Pourat called in my ear this morning: 'Hello, Go bring my thick shoes and my flannel belt! . . . Why? Because I say so. . . . In case that there may be war!' . . ."

The terrible word falls between the two women like a shell which does not explode, but holds con-

cealed powers of destruction. Madame Anselme turns pale. Then she shakes her head.

"War! My son doesn't believe in it, and he is perfectly competent to understand things, he who prophesied all the results of the elections! . . . Three years ago, in 1911, people also talked of war, and see, everything is settled. . . ."

"Monsieur Davesnes believes it. He knows about it too, as he was lieutenant before being aeroplane engineer."

"An officer! Naturally, he talks of drawing his broadsword as you do of waxing the stairs. See! Monsieur Lepoultre is going out at this hour!"

Monsieur Lepoultre, professor of political economy, well-known Esperantist and pacifist, is a kind and tired little man. He has a wan face, unkempt white hair, a pleasant smile and blue eyes that have a vacant expression because of myopia, behind his eye-glasses.

"Give me the papers, Marie. But take *l'Action* to Madame Lepoultre who is dying to know the

news . . . especially since our daughter has telegraphed that she is returning to France."

Madame Anselme, who reveres the professor, ventures to ask timidly:

"Madame Delmotte is not in danger?"

"Not at all. Her husband took her to Switzerland and both of them seemed very contented. . . . My son-in-law has decided to return, which annoys us very much, because we expected to join them next week with our two boys. . . . No doubt the lies that are spread around there have bewildered the tourists."

"The lies!" said Madame Anselme reassured. . . . "You are certain, Monsieur, that they are lies, these stories that we find in the papers?"

"Not entirely, Madame. We must distinguish. There is evidently a very grave crisis. . . . This declaration of war that Austria made day before yesterday on Servia, and the dissensions that have arisen between Russia and Germany. . . ."

"Oh! Heavens! You think that we shall have war?"

"Come now, Madame, you are off to the field

of battle. I believe that it would be *possible* to have war if the governments were not frightened themselves by the disturbance they are causing. . . . But I remain optimistic, in spite of all, and I have confidence in the moral force of opinion, in the wisdom of the people who, throughout the world, I assure you will strongly oppose the trouble makers. . . . War! The conqueror would be ruined by it, as well as the conquered! I am persuaded that it is *materially* impossible. The Kaiser and his chancellor are using dishonest means. . . . If we stand our ground, you will see, at the last moment the monster will sheathe his big sword. Besides, the progressive parties, the German Social Democrats, will counterbalance the military caste. . . . According to the information that I had last evening, the hope of a peaceful solution is not lost. . . . And that is why my son-in-law and my daughter are foolish to return to Paris the 31st of July."

"How old are your sons, Monsieur Lepoultre?"

"Twenty-two years and nineteen years. The oldest is doing his military service as cavalryman

at Lunéville. . . . The second is preparing for the Polytechnic school. . . . And you, Madame, you have a student son?"

"Yes, Monsieur. He is about to pass the philosophy examination."

"I wish him success. . . . Come, Madame, don't sow the seeds of panic. Inspire confidence in the people who show exaggerated fear."

"That is just what my son said. . . . Good-bye, and a thousand pardons for having kept you, Monsieur."

The professor departed, walking rapidly. In the stone-cutter's yard one of the masons hums in a tremulous and persuasive voice:

"L'Internationale

Sera le genre humain. . . ."

Meanwhile a gamin, very dirty and very lively, arriving from no one knows where, like a sparrow on the pavement, draws with a piece of plaster, on the sidewalk, the helmeted and moustached profile of the Emperor William.

III

THE building number 59 is what Marie Pourat calls a "rich man's house." You must realise that the apartments, provided with baths and heating arrangements, are rented at the enormous price of from fifteen hundred to three thousand francs. An architect, charmed with modernity, has designed a rectangular façade, without carvings of any sort, where the glazed brick, white, conservatively brightened with blue and green motives, takes the place of free-stone. The door reminds one of the entrance to Egyptian palaces. In the interior of the vestibule are the same enamelled bricks, under a high frieze representing lemons and oranges. Opposite the loggia on the right, there is on a large landing, a telephone booth, a sofa and a rattan table, and at the back the staircase winds in a high delicate spiral around the cage of the elevator.

When all of the tenants occupy their respective

homes, a score of domestics furnish diversion to Madame Miton, the concierge. The building, number 59, boasts of several chamber-maids, an English nurse, a Fräulein and two valet-chauffeurs who are quite the fashion in the "big houses." But since the beginning of July, the richest tenants—those who are like the plainer people of the district of L'Étoile—have gone to the mountains or the sea; only the small fry are left, the households where the one servant is assisted by occasional outside women. The motor-coupé of Mélinier, the lawyer, and the little automobile of Engineer Watson are no longer in the two coach houses at the back of the court near Sculptor Fréchette's studio. Madame Miton doesn't complain of it. This concierge, a woman as modern as the furniture, is half bourgeois, with grey hair; she is fat and rosy, and differs from Madame Pipelet, her grandmother—for the type of Parisian concierge has greatly changed since the time of Eugène Sue and of Balzac. This one has mahogany furniture and a chimney ornament of artistic imitation bronze; she practises profes-

sional indiscretion with moderation and detests cooking with onions, so dear to suburban janitors. She never condescends to dirty or menial work. She is content to ring the bell, watch the arrivals, and answer the telephone.

This morning, after having scolded Marie Pourat who is late, Madame Miton expresses her joy at seeing the house grow empty.—"Madame Moriceau and Monsieur, the Abbé, are going soon to Rochefort. Mademoiselle Couzance is going to Auvergne; Madame Davesnes to Brittany, and Madame Lepoultre to Switzerland. . . . If it wasn't for little Monsieur Fréchette, who hasn't a cent for travel, I might think of the country myself."

"Ah!" says Marie, "poor Madame Miton, you do not know then that Monsieur Lepoultre's daughter is coming back, with the three boys who muddy the staircases so dreadfully!"

"Madame Delmotte is coming back?"

"Her father told me when he took his newspapers that she is afraid there will be war!"

"Heavens! It is possible, then! Every one

has talked of it for two days. . . . Before, they were occupied with the trial of Madame Caillaux. It was exactly like the time of the Dreyfus affair. And then, when that is finished, we can't get change, the grocers raise their prices and it is said that the Germans are about to mobilise! . . . Was there any thought of that a week ago? . . . And my son Gustave is in the reserve! He goes the first day. . . . Ah! Marie, I am trying as hard as possible not to believe it, but even the thought of it has affected the nerves of my stomach."

"And my husband, will they take him from me too? He is in the territorials."

"If he is not very young, perhaps he will remain behind."

"Don't you think so? The married men, the fathers of families, they won't go? How could we live?"

"And my Gustave! Such a handsome boy, so strong and earning wages. . . . He thinks of marrying. . . ."

"Don't cry, Madame Miton. He is not gone

yet, your Gustave. Monsieur Lepoultre who is learned doesn't believe at all in the war. . . . Come take your coffee. It is growing cold. See! There is the Abbé Moriceau and his Mamma."

The glass door of the landing opens softly, and an old woman appears, followed by a young priest. Both are slender, dressed in black, and they have the same naïve expression, the same blue eyes that observe life without reflecting its shadows. The mother is fresh, under her wrinkles, while study and perhaps austerity have paled the cheeks and faded the eyes of her son.

Marie Pourat and Madame Miton say a respectful good morning to these two black shadows. When the concierge makes a motion to offer the mail, the Abbé refuses, smiling:

"Thank you, Madame . . . after the mass. . . ."

No doubt, during the hours of the morning that belong to God, the Abbé does not wish to excite his curiosity with things of earth. He does not want to think of anything but their misery and their worthlessness. What would the newspapers

tell him? Of folly, the wickedness of men, the strife of brutality against weakness, of injustice against the right, and of possible danger to the country? . . . This is no novelty in the history of the world, and, for several days, it has been a living and agitating reality. . . . The Abbé can very well wait another hour to consider the evil that is taking place. The present hour is entirely for prayer and the priest with the infantile eyes feels himself, to-day more than ever before, a mediary between doubting humanity and Eternal Justice.

He goes with his silent mother into the street, where the veiled sun commences to warm the new façades. Some travelling hawkers push along the edge of the side-walk, the carts that housewives always wait for and they announce, with modulated cries, fine tender lettuce and new vegetables. This call rouses Madame Miton.

"Take the mail quickly to the tenants, Marie. I am going to buy some peas."

At the back of the court is Alexandre Fréchette's studio. The serving woman knocks at the door,

without ceremony. She supposes that the sculptor is prolonging the sweetness of his morning nap on the divan that serves him for a bed. One knock, two knocks. . . . Marie calls:

"M'sieur Fréchette!" . . .

She is afraid of seeing through the door brusquely half-opened, an abominable creature—the model up on a table! . . . The memory of such a spectacle, presented to her scandalised eyes one day when she interrupted an hour of posing, still embarrasses Marie Pourat, in her prudery of the working woman. . . . After this adventure she feels great disapproval, mingled with fear, for artists in general, although she retains for Monsieur Fréchette, in particular, an involuntary sympathy.

"Wake up, cocoa! . . . Shall I open the door? . . . Say, do you want cocoa?"

A yawn, some inarticulate words, a laugh, soft cries. "Ah! leave the cocoa! . . . This isn't the time. . . ."

Slippers clatter on the tile floor of the studio. The key turns in the lock . . . a pretty hand, a

beautiful arm appear. The groping fingers take the paper and nimbly pick up the bottle of milk from the ground.

The door is closed. Within the studio Alexandre Fréchette and his friend noisily argue over the newspaper. Marie Pourat hears an exclamation, then a phrase, which seem to her as shocking as they are mysterious:

"War! . . . Chic, that! They will take the cubists back to the frontier! . . ."

"Oh, the artists! . . . What language! . . . And he," thinks Marie, "is not a rascal like so many, with long hair and velvet trousers. . . . He is 'a young man of family.' He should have been a doctor or clerk. And he has chosen this occupation that ruins his hands and spoils the clean rooms! And all the time he changes women! . . ."

Meanwhile Mademoiselle Julia, Mademoiselle Couzance's servant, is making signs at the window on the third floor. At Madame Lepoultre's, the kitchen blinds are not raised.

"Oh! Mercy!" said Marie Pourat, dreamily, "how I have wasted time this morning! . . . Monsieur Davesnes asked me to bring the papers at seven!"

IV

THE sunlight flickered in the ecru silk of the curtains, through the partially closed blinds. While François Davesnes still slept, worn by a long, laborious evening, the room quietly awakened. A golden atmosphere bathed the hangings of old Jouy, blue and ivory, which had the exquisite tone of Rouen porcelain. The rustic furniture, cut out of light-brown wood, received faint reflections on its curved mouldings and its glossy leather. And Simone Davesnes, half dressed in her kimono, her blond hair turned back in Chinese fashion, smiled at the familiar things that seemed to her to have held her happiness.

Seated on a stool, she put on her Japanese slippers. The narrow mirror, between the windows, reflected her image: Simone resembled women of the 18th century, but of the end of the 18th century. She had clear eyes and an aureole of ash-colored hair, made for a blue band or a

soft hat with a drooping brim. It was not Manon; it was Fanny de Chénier; it was Lucille Desmoulins, still happy. One could imagine her in a striped dress, in the park of Ermonville, on the border of the pool which reflects the artificial ruins and the cenotaph of Rousseau.

This feminine type is full of grace, but its suavity is not without monotony. The glance of Simone sufficed to brighten all its tame sweetness. It was thoughtful, strangely passionate, and variable as water, for it had a thousand moods; it expressed sometimes malice, but more often, naïve goodness and the purity of a soul that could not be false.

Involuntarily Simone contemplated her face in the mirror.

The beauty of women is the visible radiation of their happiness. Simone had become very beautiful since her marriage to François Davesnes; and when she looked at herself, she no longer recognised, in the happy woman, the traits of the young girl she had formerly been.

Her father, Simon Bouvet, captain of colonial

infantry, died in Madagascar when she was quite small. Educated in the Lodge House she knew little of her mother, who seemed to her on visiting days like an austere person, always in mourning. Madame Bouvet, enbittered by unhappiness, saw nothing in life but its most sombre aspect and consoled herself for her griefs by foreboding trouble. Her gloomy face subdued all gaiety and crushed all joy and even her friends, who pitied her, somewhat dreaded her and gradually kept away from her.

As the presence of a child was a care to her during the vacations, Madame Bouvet willingly confided her child to some rich cousins, the Bouvets of Monderie, who lived in autumn in their château of Plessis-l'Étang. They had one daughter a little older than Simone. The two cousins, in spite of the inequality of their worldly conditions, lived together like two sisters who loved each other tenderly.

When Simone lost her mother and left the Lodge House, Monsieur Bouvet de la Monderie gave her an opportunity for lessons in design and

modelling. He noticed that she possessed delicate sensibility and very fine and perfect taste, and hoped that she would become an artist. But first of all, the young girl wanted to acquire material independence, and she courageously resigned herself to designing fashion figures, and to creating with wax and stuffs those charming mannequin-dolls that are almost works of art.

In this way she passed the long years, all of her first youth. Without jealousy, she saw many of her old companions marry, and her cousin, Nicolette, become the wife of Jean Raynaud, who was rich and fascinating. The little wax ladies representing successive Parisian fashions—Empire furs, princess dresses, "hobble" skirts and Oriental tunics—acquired a melancholy air under the light fingers of Simone. . . . But, in 1912, after having bedecked an entire miniature harem with gorgeous coats and pearl-trimmed turbans, Mademoiselle Bouvet dressed in white satin a bride who became the last little figure of the collection. . . .

That year, in September, Simone went to stay

for a short time at Plessis-l'Étang, with Nicolette Raynaud and there she met François Davesnes.

He was at that time a lieutenant of artillery. Jean Raynaud had known him from college days and had a great affection for him. In the slightly cosmopolitan world frequented by Jean and Nicolette, there were not many men comparable to him. François Davesnes was both serious and light-hearted, a realist and sentimental. His very supple quick mind was balanced by a patient will, without violence and inflexible.

Military life, which often tends to confine men to the routine of a specialty, did not keep him from being interested in everything, but his heart remained very young. His comrades, his soldiers, knew that he was good. No one knew how tender he could be.

Having no longer a family, he had accommodated himself, as well as he could, to a solitary existence, because he had been an intense worker, and because he had enriched his intellectual life. At twenty-nine he had an air of precocious maturity and a natural dignity, a little distant, which

women took for coldness. Several flattered themselves that they could attract and carry him off, humble and submissive, in their train. But Lieutenant Davesnes did not permit himself to be domesticated, not even by a beautiful woman, and more than one fell into the snare that she herself had laid. Others imagining that this officer would marry a woman with a large dowry, plumed themselves on pushing the matter in society. Nicolette proposed a certain "good match" to him. François quickly discouraged this friendly solicitude. He loved his calling, in spite of the small pay and the slowness of advancement, and had not felt any desire to enrich himself—especially by the means of marriage.

Neither Jean, nor even Nicolette had thought of presenting Simone Bouvet to him as a possible fiancée, for the Raynauds, entirely occupied with hunting, dancing, flirting, quarrelling and becoming reconciled with each other, could not conceive of marriage without luxury which—they said—rendered it supportable. Also when chance brought François Davesnes and Simone Bouvet

together, neither of them attached any importance to their mutual sympathy, which seemed to them part of a light flirtation. The life of the château permitted a delicious liberty. The autumn was mild and golden. Simone enjoyed reading under the reddening elms of the park, and often François seated himself near her. They chatted without conventionality, and gaily, of frivolous matters and grave, and thus, without realising it, revealed themselves to each other. . . . The agreement of their ideas and sentiments so charmed them, that they forgot to be surprised. Near Simone, François was overwhelmed with an unknown emotion, but he concealed the homesickness he experienced when he was separated from the young girl for a single day; and Simone, near François, had the sensation of being understood and protected.

One day, in the damp avenue where the leaves had already collected, François took the hand of his friend and asked:

"May I keep it always? Are you willing that we should go together through life and that this little hand should never leave mine?"

They became engaged, to the surprise and scandal of the people around them, who had been so polite over the supposed flirtation. Jean Raynaud was very fond of Simone. He ventured to charge François with imprudence. He said to him:

"You are committing a folly, a very great folly. . . . But how will you live, Simone and you?"

François responded:

"A man can always live and take care of his wife, if he is not weak, drunken, or lazy."

And as he did not allow any interval to elapse between decision and action, he went away, ignored the advice of his friends and ended by finding a place as engineer in an aviation factory. The salary was modest for a beginning, but in time the situation would become more advantageous.

After two years of marriage, the couple were as ardently in love as in the days of the honeymoon. The material difficulties of their life and their relative solitude in this Paris where they knew few people, strengthened their attachment.

They were friends and comrades, reading the same books, breathing the same intellectual atmosphere, prolonging their lengthy conversations, and suddenly in a kiss becoming lovers again, for love had given to them all the graces, and the sweetness of the days continued unbroken.

All the memories of these two years and all the disquietude which Simone still wished to keep away from her spirit, caused a deep tenderness as she looked at François. His big masculine form lay like a beautiful fallen tree. Simone admired his forehead, closely capped with brown hair, the straight eye-brows, separated by a wrinkle, the rigid line of the nose, the arched mouth, the firm and pliable chin. Sleep had effaced the marks of time and fatigue on his face, which had assumed the purity, the austere nobility and almost the consistence of a bronze statue.

Simone murmured:

"My dear love! . . . My only love. . . ."

François seemed to tremble in his rest. Then Simone put her hand on his forehead, guarding

the sleep that was slipping away from him like a delicate veil.

And when he was entirely quiet, she crept away, silently. She closed the door of the room behind her, crossed the vestibule and the passage leading to the bathroom. There she was busy in arranging her husband's toilet articles and clothes before she lighted the tea-kettle. In the dining-room, papered with a gay yellow paper, she went to fetch the plates, the cups, and the rolls for breakfast. It was for her a pleasant custom, a joy renewed each morning, for she knew how to create pleasures out of the tasks imposed upon her by her modest means. There are no common duties that are not capable of becoming genuine rites of love; there is no woman in love who does not know how to serve the man she adores. But the Parisian women know how to conceal the prudent housewife and only let the sweetheart and lover be seen; they know how to gloss over their virtue with an elegant frivolity, and they pass off with a jest, the avowal of their devotion.

The cups were placed on a napkin over the

table-cloth, and the water sang in the kettle, when Simone heard Marie Pourat entering the kitchen.

She noticed the agitated look of the woman from Aveyron.

"Are you ill, my good Marie?"

The other moaned:

"Who is happy, to-day? . . . Madame Anselme is tormented; the concierge weeps; Gouge raises the price of his goods; one cannot get any more change and the daughter of Monsieur Lepoultre is coming back from Switzerland because she fears the Germans. . . . There is nobody that is not upset. But the poor women have a lot of trouble. . . ."

And without transition:

"Doesn't Madame wish to lay in a stock of provisions? Every one is doing it."

"Have you lost your head, out in the neighborhood?" said Simone. "Provisions? As if for a siege? . . . That would be droll. . . . Go to your work, Marie, and above all, return at ex-

actly ten o'clock, because I want to go out. I am to breakfast with Madame Raynaud. . . ."

"And for dinner?"

"Be here at five o'clock. You will find the written orders on the buffet."

"And for money?"

"My poor Marie! One would think to hear you that war had already been declared!"

Relieved of Marie Pourat, Madame Davesnes stopped smiling and unrolled her newspaper. With one look, she took in the titles of the principal articles, the latest despatches and some phrases with disturbed feeling. . . .

And suddenly the agony returned which she had experienced the evening before, an agony which the words of her husband and sleep had dissipated. . . .

"Simone? . . . Where are you, Simone?"

She returned to the bedroom. François was up and half dressed and received her with a displeased expression. He had opened the window and raised the blinds.

"It is eight o'clock!" he said. "You promised to waken me and you let me sleep!"

"You worked so late. . . ."

"An order is an order. It was your duty to waken me. . . ."

She begged his pardon and François disarmed, kissed her.

"Give me the paper, dearest. I have not time to read it all. But I will buy others, a large package, to read in the subway. . . . This will be another difficult day for me! It will be impossible to come back for lunch here. You are going to Nicolette? . . . She will tell you if Jean intends to return. . . . He should leave the Engadine."

Simone murmured sadly:

"My poor François, what an existence you lead . . . when are we to have a vacation?"

"Vacation? . . . In Germany, perhaps. . . ."

"Oh!"

"Read. . . . They are fighting on the Drina. . . . Germany refuses to mediate with Austria."

Leaning on his shoulder, she read vaguely, her look confused, her throat tightened. They were

near the window and the sun shone on both of them with one ray of light.

"What do you think of all that?" she demanded.

"Nothing that is good. The equivocation, this menace of mobilising if Russia mobilises, conceal a well-determined plan. . . . It is best for us, as William says, to keep our powder dry . . . and it is not the time to be leisurely . . . I must finish dressing and I shall rejoin you by the teapot. . . . Come, come, Madame, don't sulk. I have scolded you a little, but I love you, my darling!"

He went to the bathroom and soon returned, entirely dressed and ready to go.

Breakfast was served. He swallowed his tea without tasting it. He hurried Simone:

"Will you give me my gloves? . . . And the papers I brought last evening. . . . I am not polite this morning, but my time does not make it possible. . . . We have equipment to turn over, other things to examine. . . . And if they mobilise, our workers will go. . . ."

"François, I am afraid!"

"You were so reasonable yesterday! Meanwhile the situation has upset us. . . ."

"I am frightened!"

"Evil foreseen, is not inevitable evil. . . . We must become accustomed in future to this idea that our neighbors will perhaps—I say, *perhaps* —the war that we do not wish . . . and which we shall be able to accept. . . . The exigency will find us up and ready with an answer. . . ."

He pressed Simone to his heart and turning towards him, she saw his grey eyes moved with a deep tenderness. . . .

"Listen, my Simone," he said, calmly. "You are sad because I seem less tender to you than usual, more distrait, more nervous. . . . My heart is all love, darling, you know it. But are you able to comprehend what is happening to me, and in what a fever we are living at the factory? There is one thought that dominates our thoughts, one duty surpassing all others. Imagine that we are almost all officers on leave, or resigned, and

that the army we have left may recall us to-morrow. . . ."

"It has already recalled you," said Simone. ". . . I see you changing from day to day. You are becoming again, what you have never ceased to be, in the depths of your soul, a soldier."

"Then, you must love me as one must love a soldier, without weakness."

"I will try, François. . . ."

"You must be calm, tender, hopeful, accepting destiny. . . . I shall not be really strong until I feel you strong, behind me. Come, now, until evening, my dearest wife!"

She followed him to the threshold of the apartment and closing the door behind him, returned to the room. There she again picked up the printed sheets and her eyes wandered over them.

The sun, playing in the silken veil of her loosened hair, touched her cheek and fell on the paper with a brilliant ray exactly at the place where she could read:

"The day now beginning will bring either peace or war."

War! . . . People had talked of it for a week, as a possible event at some indefinite time which might come shortly. They had talked about it especially, since the sending of the Austrian ultimatum to Servia. Far-seeing men had given the alarm and diplomatic exchanges had begun. . . . But the historic events taking place in Vienna and at Belgrade still seemed to the idlers of the Boulevard but new episodes of an old quarrel—a convulsion in the distant chaos of the Balkans—while the smallest incidents of the trial assumed the importance of historic events! In most of the papers, the despatches and comments on the European crisis were relegated to the second place. The words of the trial, demanded eagerly by the public, filled the pages to overflowing. They wagered for or against condemnation. People who knew recited in one's ear extracts from apocryphal letters, and those privileged to attend the trial enjoyed as if it were a circus, the contest where feminine heart-burnings were displayed, where disappointed ambitions sought their

revenge, where soiled linen was washed, the secrets of the buffoon and secrets of state.

The trial concealed France from strangers, spectators also: but for the French, it obscured Europe. In the midst of the clamors of the pretorium and of the street, they did not hear the first rumble of thunder on the horizon.

Now, Europe appeared to those who had not understood and watched, obscure, full of the unknown, like a heavy cloud descending in a storm. Austria had thrown herself upon Servia—the cry of a small people not wishing to die, had moved Russia, mother of the Slavs. Then the real France had shown herself. She held faithful to her traditions, to her agreements, to her ancient honor as a free nation. And by her side, England stood as a friend. Strong in their pacific desire, they proposed an agreement founded on justice. They remembered that the weak have a right to live, that it is the duty of the strong to be just, if not merciful. But she who planned the mischief in the dark, the Germany incased in iron, brutal and cunning, pedantic and voracious, looked at them

behind her spectacles and dismembered them already methodically, in thought. They said to her, "Say a word to your ally, who is also your servant. Peace and war are in your hands." She replied with ambiguous talk, while waiting for the hour, chosen by her, the hour that was coming inexorably, minute by minute. . . .

And the French felt it coming, this hour! . . . Forgetting their family quarrels, they held close together, heart to heart, hand in hand, in silence, turning their faces in the same direction. One common thought absorbed forty millions of human beings. In every house throughout the city that morning, were women who thought as Simone Davesnes, "Perhaps to-morrow" . . . and others who wept like Madame Miton, and others who prayed like Madame Moriceau, and others who had a presentiment of the scourge, without understanding the same, like Madame Anselme, or Marie Pourat. And in the streets the men going to their work, began to turn again into what François Davesnes had become so quickly: soldiers. . . .

But it was only thoughts that had changed; the outward appearance of life had not as yet been influenced by the approaching danger. The street which Simone saw through the net curtains, the street with its chestnut trees and its cooing pigeons, its fences covered with varied advertisements, its blue and white masons, continued its provincial quiet. A little girl skipped the rope. . . . Abbé Moriceau and his Mamma returned from the mass . . . an old chickweed seller, ragged as a tramp and red-bearded like a satyr, passed, bent under a weight of green herbs and starry flowers. . . . How many times, on Sunday mornings, his little melody of three notes, where the freshest rustic poetry beats its wings like a bird, had wakened Simone and François! . . . It was in this same room resembling old porcelain bathed in sunlight. . . . Oh! lingering mornings, delicious idleness! Marie arrived later than usual; she didn't make any noise in the house. . . . The lunch seemed like a small dinner. . . . Simone and François, very often, rather than mingle with the church-going people,

stayed at home. They read various poems aloud. She sang a few songs. The Raynauds came at five o'clock for tea. . . . Beautiful Sundays, days of leisure extending like a white road to nightfall! . . . The melody that called "Chickweed for the little birds" was inseparable from these pictures, these memories. . . . And the light-brown furniture, the engravings, the glass between the faded gold roses in the old frame, the little clock in its leather case, the fine books on the carved chest of drawers, spoke only to Simone of the love for which they had helped make an abiding place. . . . Without, within the dwelling, nothing responded to the disquietude of the woman who sought everywhere a reflection of her sombre thoughts. Why is there not on the eve of a terrible cataclysm, something of the unknown in the tints of the atmosphere, in the sounds, in the silence, in the mysterious physiognomy of material objects? . . .

Thus Simone dreamed, her spirit wrapped in such a stupor that she remained immovable,

thinking of her daily life, incapable of imagining what might happen on the morrow. The "horrors of war" did not haunt her. She did not make any mental picture of the departure of François. . . . She thought only of her happiness, their happiness, as a precious thing, escaping from her hands, apparently safe and whole, but perhaps to be broken forever.

V

SHE was not yet dressed when the serving woman returned.

Simone was forced to listen to her account of the incidents of the morning. Marie was not more talkative or more curious than most of her kind. Secrets of private life, spread in the servants' quarters or at the stores, left her indifferent. But the affairs of France belonged to all the world and every one commented in his own way. Already, some legends had taken form.

There was one of the Maggi dairies.

"Madame doesn't doubt it? Well, it is a German house, quite full of spies. The proprietor left with ten millions in gold in an automobile and was arrested, just as he passed the frontier."

"Ten millions in gold . . . that would weigh a lot! . . . Who told you that?"

"Juliette, the servant of Madamoiselle Couzance."

"And how did Juliette know it?"

"A very reliable man said it right before her, at the post office. He said also that if war is declared, the milk will be poisoned by spies, to kill the French children."

"Don't believe such stupid stories, Marie!"

"Madame doesn't believe that there are quantities of spies around us?"

"There are many, I am sure. . . . But this story of poisoned milk. . . ."

"Nothing could be more certain. It was a man who told Juliette. . . . And he said besides that they were going to tear from the wall the big enamel plaques, the advertisements of Bouillon K. . . . There was something written upside down and in cipher, in German. . . ."

Simone did not try to discuss it. Was there any truth in these stories of spies? The people held them to be absolutely authentic; they pleased a childish taste for the marvellous and a natural disposition to see traitors everywhere, since their confidence—their imprudent, excessive confidence —was disturbed.

The woman from Aveyron had also a fixed idea: provisions. Almost all the neighbors had taken precautions, without knowing why. Instinctive foresight, so much the more bizarre as the Parisian population did not dote on it. They did not have any real fear, nor any reasonable calculation, in this somewhat droll excess of precaution. It was a complex phenomenon, which came first and foremost from a distant and irresistible association of ideas. War carried with it the possibility of siege. For people who had lived through the winter of 1870 were still very numerous. They had brought up two generations on accounts of the horrible food: stewed cats, mice patties and dog cutlets. Also the good Parisians who would accept without faltering a war imposed by Germany, who would accept with willingness to sacrifice and faith in victory, went automatically to get at a very high price old dried beans, prunes, macaroni and petrol.

Their prudence had other causes. When war was declared, the general mobilisation would monopolise all the rolling stock of the railroad, block

all the roads and how could Paris be provisioned? They had never been through that experience. In the uncertainty, they wanted to be sure of indispensable food, and not to be at the mercy of shopkeepers who raised the price of commodities, without shame. Simultaneously, the same prudence which made them put money in chests, created over night a scarcity of money.

The tac-tac of a motor, in the street, diverted the attention of Simone. She saw an automobile, laden with trunks, stopping before her open window. Monsieur Lepoultre descended, then his son-in-law and his daughter. Also Madame Miton went out on the sidewalk. She took possession of the packages that filled the interior of the vehicle and submerged the three little Delmottes.

The hope of learning what had happened beyond the frontier increased the helpfulness of the good woman. . . .

"Give me the children, Madame Delmotte. How tired they are, the darlings!"

The three boys—two years, three years and four years old—were pale with fatigue. Their mother, a faded blonde who greatly resembled Monsieur Lepoultre, had red and heavy eyes.

"We have had a terrible journey," she said, "and we arrived three hours late. . . . Impossible to find anything to eat in the buffets. Impossible to sleep in the crowded cars. . . . All the French are returning to France."

Monsieur Lepoultre, who acted as if he were guilty, did not wish to excite the masses, in the person of Madame Miton. He exclaimed:

"Hurry. . . . The chauffeur is leaving the trunks in the vestibule. They must be carried up at once. . . . Gabrielle, take away your rascals. . . ."

Meanwhile, Monsieur Delmotte, a big wretch of an architect with a brown beard, repeated with a triumphant air:

"I predicted it to you, Father! . . . I am not a doctor, not I. . . . I am not a sociologist, not I. . . . But I have been in Germany! I have seen the work of people who scorn us more than

they hate us. I have met their manufacturers, their bankers, their men of affairs! . . . I have no illusions, not I! . . ."

"I would point out to you, Edouard. . . ."

"Simple souls! . . . The French are easy marks! . . ." cried the architect, waving an umbrella case.

"Edouard! Don't excite yourself!" begged Monsieur Lepoultre, desperately.

He remembered suddenly that Madame Delmotte and her children had preceded him to the family apartment, and without putting down the two valises that burdened his arms, he called:

"Gabrielle!"

"Papa?"

"I beg you to be careful of your mother's nerves. . . . Do not be pessimistic! Don't imagine anything as a fact that is only a menace. . . . I have had to reassure the poor woman greatly, she trembles already for her sons."

The chauffeur, a placid old fellow, returned to carry the heaviest of the trunks to the vestibule. He joined in the talk with the liberty of a citizen

who addresses other citizens about a public matter and with a feeling of perfect equality.

"You have probably come from that *very place?* Is it true that *they* are mobilising?"

"We were in Switzerland," replied Monsieur Delmotte, counting his money, after looking at the tariff card. . . . "It is certain that the Germans are making military preparations, while their diplomats amuse us. . . . They are more crafty than we are. When they are ready, at the moment decided, to-morrow, this evening, they will attack us on the borders."

The chauffeur climbed back on his seat.

"And the English, Monsieur? They are with us, the English?"

"No one knows anything about that."

"They *should* be with us! It is to their interest, Monsieur. . . What will they do, if Germany devours France? . . . I don't want to say that it would be *easy* to devour. We must be ready for them. Strong or not strong, it's true, isn't it, that we must defend ourselves? . . . Three, ninety-

five. . . . That's the amount. . . . Thank you, Monsieur."

He put the money in his pocket-book, and finished:

"Since the time that the old Sourkrouts pestered us, we have wanted to say to them: 'Zut!' They think that we are not men. . . . The French, they say, are all rotten and tuberculous. . . . At last it gets to be a nuisance. . . . I am the father of a family. I earn my living without bothering any one. If an ill-bred person seeks satisfaction from me, have I got to stand it? . . . Once, twice, I will say nothing, for I am a peaceable man. But if he insists, I shall punch him in the face. . . . It is my right. . . . There, Monsieur, is the idea of a French working-man on this matter of the war."

"It is also the idea of the bourgeois," said Monsieur Delmotte.

The automobile started, Simone, involuntary witness of this scene, thought that the good chauffeur had given a very exact résumé of the national feeling.

The care that she was obliged to give to her toilet helped to calm her nerves. The necessity of doing small actions, conforming to daily habits, is excellent for restoring moral poise. When Simone had rolled up her blonde hair around her head, put on her white leather shoes, her dark blue serge dress and her hat ornamented with white wings, found her moire bag, her blue umbrella, her gloves, her purse and her keys, she was herself again.

But before going out, she consulted the memorandum book, where she had noted the program of the afternoon, the list of small errands—gloves, veils, beach shoes—with the hour for a fitting at the dressmaker's and the addresses of several villas to let. . . . And the futility of all the purchases, of all these errands struck her. . . . Why do them? Why decide? For what purpose was an etamine dress embroidered with yellow flowers? . . . Why prefer the Kermarie villa to the villa Kerhostin? . . . Vacations? . . . Who would have vacations? Nobody on this last day of July 1914 would be able to carry out any project but

the most modest and the most necessary, without subordinating it to this terrible possibility—war! . . . More than reading the papers, more than the alarms of the women and the scarcity of money, this necessity of suspending life, of confining herself to the present moment, made Simone experience its first real influence and it was like the first direct contact with the unheard-of thing that was approaching. Already the idea of the war penetrated the spirit of the people and hereafter it began to weigh heavily on every man and every woman, to hinder every action, to abolish every sentiment that did not belong to it.

To find a taxi-cab, Simone walked up the avenue where the warm gentle breeze stirred the leaves of the pine trees, and made flickering spots of sun and shade. The open-air market of fruits and flowers added bright notes of color to the bluish grey of the Parisian landscape. In the carts, arranged in rows along the edge of the sidewalks, the baskets were empty because it was the end of July. Women squatted down under the

doorways, and sold red roses in bunches and large rustic bouquets. Passers-by, dressed in light costumes, walked on the street deluged by watering carts, heedless of infrequent carriages. The creaking of the trolley announced the yellow street-cars which appeared, coupled together, two-by-two, at the angle of the grand *Place*. They seemed to disjoint in turning around, then rigid, moved off to the suburbs.

It was the ordinary Paris of summer, nonchalant, dusty and blooming, in a misty light. Madame Davesnes, a second time, felt the sensation of astonishment that she had experienced at the spectacle of the peaceful street. . . . Was she dreaming now, or had she dreamed a short time before, when she had felt as a reality, the menace and danger? . . . The gaiety of the avenue, its fruits, its roses, its display of abundance expressing the joy of living, brought back to Simone's consciousness the thoughts of yesterday. . . .

The vibrating automobile bore her away. On the way districts as numerous and different as

cities, left their impression upon her, mingling and gathering in her memory and forming a supreme image, the unique aspect of Paris. . . . Shady avenues of the left bank, hedges and terraces of the Luxembourg, old Latin countries by the side of a Merovingian hill, sluggish river reflecting fifteen centuries of glory between the Gothic towers and the young poplars; gilded spire, venturesome as the desires of a hero, royal elegances of the Louvre, modern streets beautiful with life and passionate movement, Paris of science and of dreams, Paris of will and of action, making a Paris by itself. . . . And on the face of living stone and of living sky, where so much brightness and so many shadows drifted, Simone could see on that morning, by indefinable transitions, the smile slowly fading.

Paris still kept the charm which comes from the air, from the season, the fine tints and the noble architectural lines of an ancient and civilised city. But as a delicate color turns to grey when day declines, the charm of the French capitol waned in seriousness. An appearance of gaiety existed,

perhaps, in the suburbs where the news arrived more slowly, where the simplicity of the people did not give up its illusions so quickly. In the centre of the town, news spreads from mouth to mouth, is commented upon, criticised, understood; the less educated people adapt themselves rapidly to circumstances, and the union is more prompt and more perceptible between the citizens and the city.

Simone noticed the gravity of the faces, the silent intensity of emotion, in the crowd thronging between the Opera-House and the Saint Lazare station. The people on foot were not exactly sad, but all, without exception, were serious. The tone of conversation was lowered. Even the little dressmakers did not chatter. The coachmen and chauffeurs collided with each other without abuse. Women did not look at the shops; men did not look at the women. . . . Suddenly, running out to the corner of the street a frantic newspaper seller brandished the leaves of a journal, yelling the "latest news." His cry struck the nerves of the startled crowd unendurably, almost like a

spasm. There was a swarming of ants around the man, then an eddy behind his distracted course. And other cries, crossing each other like projectiles, beat against the façades of the buildings, the railings of the station and the darkening sky. Still other cries reverberated, in a dull roar, to the depths of a thousand breasts.

VI

THE private mansion of the Raynauds, situated on the Rue du Rocher, not far from the Rue de Rome, had belonged to Nicolette's father, Monsieur Bouvet de la Monderie. This rather ugly building, in the new Renaissance style in favor under Jules Grévy, reminded Simone Davesnes of the melancholy days of her youth. She had spent the Christmas and Easter holidays in this sumptuous, but rather lugubrious house. The faint light, diminished by complicated curtains, was diffused like regret over the sombre wainscoting, the Flemish tapestries and the ebony chests. At four o'clock in winter, it was necessary to light the gas. . . . Simone longed for Monsieur Bouvet de la Monderie again, her uncle and tutor, with his magistrate's whiskers and his bishop's manner, and Madame Bouvet de la Monderie, always ailing on her plush sofa, and Nico-

lette, eight years old, wearing an English dress that fell to her feet. . . .

In crossing the gallery of the first floor, where she had played so often in times past, among the chasubles, the pier-tables, the Sedan chairs and armor, Simone did not recover any of her childish impressions. The bric-a-brac was banished to Plessis-l'Étang, and the long gallery, quite light, with the green trellis that imitated porticoes on the white background of the wall, with its carpet that looked like flagging and its lemon trees in boxes, had the pleasing charm of an orangery of the eighteenth century. It ran parallel to the dining-room, hung with tapestries of Rambouillet, to the pale purple salon, to the big yellow salon, and it led to the library smoking-room when Jean Reynaud worked and received his intimate friends.

The footman conducted the visitor into this sort of oval pagoda, with a concave, gilded ceiling, furnished with low bookcases in black wood and with a violet satin divan. The Persian glass windows gave a colored light. The wreathed columns of an ancient altar-screen, loaded with

vines and golden grapes, was bathed in this shimmering glow of twilight. Round cushions, ornamented with wool dahlias, were thrown here and there on the carpet. Nicolette Raynaud, seated on one of the cushions, was busy telephoning.

"*L'Epoque?* Is this the paper, *L'Epoque?* . . . I want Monsieur Desmoulins, the political editor. . . . He isn't there? . . . You are sure, Mademoiselle? . . ."

—— . . .

"That's it, find out. . . . Please say that Madame Jean Raynaud is at the telephone. . . . Thank you! . . . . I shall wait. . . . Don't cut me off! . . ."

Without putting down the receiver, Nicolette held out her free hand to her cousin.

"How do you do? I am so glad to see you. . . . You will forgive me? I am telephoning to our friend Desmoulins to get all the exciting news."

She smiled, but her black eyes, her sultana eyes, were sad and had dark circles underneath. Rouge

brightened her brown cheeks. Her very dark hair, arranged like a shell, gave her face long lines. She had a slender figure, attractive because of its extreme suppleness, which was draped rather than dressed in green crêpe de chine.

"Sit down, Simone. . . . You are well? . . . And François? . . . I am a wreck. . . . I dined yesterday with the Mongirails and when I returned I had to endure three telephone calls from my mother-in-law, little Gardave and from Maxime. . . . Has Jean returned? . . . Has he sent any news of himself? It is to be hoped that he will not be arrested en route! . . . But, because Maxime urged it I telegraphed in the morning to Pontresina. . . . I expected a reply the same day. . . . And nothing came! . . . Yes: a letter, which is dated Monday."

"Did Jean seem to have a presentiment of serious events?"

Nicolette shrugged her shoulders.

"You understand. He wouldn't go to the trouble of a correspondence for a woman who is *his* wife. . . . He tells me that the hotel is agree-

able enough, that his walking boots have stretched, that he had made Sunday a little trial ascent. . . . And he did not add what I can imagine without difficulty: 'Don't hurry to arrive with Fräulein and the brats. I can manage to live *en garçon* very nicely.' "

"Nicolette, you slander him!"

Madame Raynaud made a gesture signifying: "Don't speak! . . ."

And talking into the instrument:

"Hello! . . . Hello! . . . Is it you, Desmoulins? . . . We are cut off? . . . It is insufferable, Mademoiselle! Give me 926-31. . . . *L'Epoque.*"

Simone sat down on the divan. . . . Truly, the smoking-room did not please her; everything seemed animated by a brutal spirit. Even in the silence, one was oppressed instead of being charmed! And this morning, especially, the barbarity and affectation of this conglomerate decoration irritated Simone as much as her cousin's theatrical costume and rouge.

The latter kept demanding:

"926-31. . . . Hello! . . . I am speaking to Monsieur Desmoulins? . . . At last! . . . Good morning, my friend! . . . I am not too indiscreet? I want to know. . . ."

——— . . .

"No, Jean has not returned."

——— . . .

"Right in Pontresina. At the urgent request of my brother-in-law, Maxime, I telegraphed him yesterday morning. . . . The answer did not come. . . . It vexes me. . . ."

——— . . .

"He must return at all cost? . . . Alas! I know it. . . . All of our friends are coming. . . . But do you really think that this haste . . ."

——— . . .

"A little relief this morning? . . . What? Jaurès doesn't understand the nervousness of Paris? . . . He still believes in a pacific solution? Ah! if he is only right! . . . London talks with Berlin. . . . Yes, there is a conference. . . . We can still hope. . . . You hear, Simone?"

——— . . .

"Fräulein? . . . I must send Fräulein back. . . . But she is inoffensive, the poor creature! . . . She doesn't understand anything that is happening! . . ."

—— . . .

"I shall say to her that it is for her interest. . . . But she will be terribly sad, and I myself. . . . Still, if the conference of ambassadors . . ."

—— . . .

"What? German citizens have already gone? . . . Then they foresaw it. . . ."

—— . . .

"And England, Desmoulins, will it . . ."

—— . . .

"Not over the telephone? . . . Ah! Yes! . . . Perfectly. . . . I shall follow your advice. . . . You will call me about three o'clock? . . . Thank you. Until later, Desmoulins. . . . Don't forget!"

She hung up the receiver.

"You understood, Simone? . . ."

"Nearly all."

"Desmoulins says that there is a relaxing of tension. . . . From everywhere, they urge Germany to intervene at Vienna. . . . And while the diplomats talk, we gain time."

"Time that Germany will use profitably."

Simone related the tragicomic return of the Delmotte family.

"You see that the German preparations are known in Switzerland. Jean, who must have been warned of it before us, has left there without delay. . . ."

"I wish that he were here!" said Nicolette. . . . "Desmoulins has comforted me a little. . . . Meanwhile, he advises me to send the children's Fräulein back to her native country. . . . That distresses me, Simone. The girl has been so devoted! . . . I shall notify her this noon, and I shall arrange that she goes under the best possible conditions. . . . What a grief for her and for the children! . . . Ah! my dear Simone, I have all the cares at once, all!"

"Why did Jean go without you? . . ."

"Jean detests travelling with the entire family

and I realise that the presence of the children and their governess irritates him in the train. . . . He has not a vocation for paternity like his brother Maxime, who, moreover, is a celibate! And then, we are not inseparable. . . . It is a good while since the honeymoon has set! . . . You will see, in some ten years, if you are not able to live one or two weeks alone! No, I do not want to be separated from Jean, but I wish that he would return! . . .

She resumed the aggressive tone that she affected, to hide her melancholy. Her face was drawn and wrinkled, under the paint, and this suffering fatigue of her features made a singular contrast to the sumptuousness of her green dress.

Simone longed to question her tenderly. . . . She suspected a crisis in the Raynaud ménage, because for some time the couple, without acknowledging a misunderstanding, had seemed mutually indifferent. Jean led the life of a voluptuous dilettante, as artist of a race lacking the creative gift and a practitioner who lacked title and a coat of arms. He was a mixture of ardor and indif-

ference. He collected books, raised greyhounds, wrote studies on falconry, but he felt that all his opinions were whims, all his activities a series of useless motions, all his life an imitation of the higher life, a magnificent harmony of thought and of action to which he had never attained. . . . Poor, he would have been ambitious; rich, he squandered his energy. Married too young, astonished to be a father, to have the charge of a family, he missed his liberty as a celibate. After having treated Nicolette as a mistress, then as a comrade, he did not know exactly what she was to him: an ornament, a burden, a duty? . . . Of a certainty she was not his mate.

Nicolette, sentimental under an appearance of sharpness which she thought fashionable, an egoist and consumed by a secret need of tenderness, maternal, with more of passion than of solicitude, Nicolette, with false pride that tolerated neither criticism nor counsel, suffered from not being guided like a child by a very gentle master who would scold her sometimes and always cherish her.

Her daughter and her son—six years and nine

years old—were not enough for her heart! The men who courted her made no impression on her calm reason and her exacting imagination. Secretly, she loved and admired her husband, with a sort of bitterness. To others, she criticised him sharply.

Never, though a very feminine feeling, had she made detailed confidences to Simone, because Simone was too happy, but often she had shown her surprise before this evident and inexplicable happiness. Astonishment without any jealousy, for Nicolette wanted to be loved as Simone was loved, and not to live as Simone lived. . . . To live in an apartment on fifteen hundred francs, in an unfashionable street, travelling in the subway and autobus, to be served by a Marie Pourat, wearing simple dresses and not going to expensive parts of the theatres, how could such a life help being for a pretty woman a continuous punishment? . . . And meanwhile, Simone accomplished the miracle of remaining a "lady" with her modest income, of being attractively dressed, of never seeming embarrassed by the housework, which makes a

woman commonplace and is unfavorable to love! . . .

Madame Davesnes, who knew the susceptibility of her cousin, did not venture to persist in this delicate matter. To change the subject, she began to talk of the children.

"Pierre is out walking with his Uncle Maxime," said Nicolette. "You will see both of them at breakfast. . . . Marianne is being punished in her room."

"What has she done?"

"She sprang upon her brother to take a cake from him. . . . And she bit his hand—not very hard—but with quite criminal intentions. . . . I was obliged to be severe. . . . Very seriously, I said to Marianne, that she was a savage, and that she must be treated like one, that no one was permitted among civilised beings who could not control her temper and who bit the people around her. . . . Marianne is temporarily excluded from civilisation, that is, shut up in her room."

Nicolette's eyes brightened when she spoke of her children. She did not occupy herself with

them continuously and they did not console her for all her grief, real or imaginary. Her life as a woman of fashion separated her from them, as from her husband; and her lively maternal instinct satisfied itself as well as it could with her effusions and sudden anxieties.

VII

TOWARDS noon, Dr. Raynaud brought back little Pierre.

He was very fond of this nephew, loved him like a son, and the chances of heredity had made the boy like himself. The man of forty-four years, bald and wearing a grey beard, stunted by a studious life in a close room, was ugly—with an agreeable ugliness, which attracted sympathy —while the little boy, strengthened by fresh air and cold water, combined French slenderness with animal grace and the brusqueness of an English lad. They resembled each other, however, in the forehead with large temples, the smile of slightly heavy lips and the brown eyes that fastened upon things slowly, as if penetrating them. The moral personality of the child, still uncertain, began also to reproduce in its essential traits the character of the uncle.

Maxime Raynaud was ten years older than his

brother and he had grown up under quite different influences. Born among the rich bourgeois, raised by a family attached to all the traditions of respectability and of prudence, he became at college the pride of his parents. It was the time when young men preferred a poem to a football game and a philosopher to a champion boxer. Maxime had said: "I shall be a doctor. . . ." For the parents that meant "I shall be a doctor in a hospital, professor in the faculty, member of the Academy of Medicine, and I shall have a golden practice that my income will permit me to wait for. . . ." Maxime had arranged his life on another plan: He wished to be a man of science and a free man. The disappointed family Raynaud lamented over having nourished in his person a hopeless dreamer, and transferred its hopes of glorification to the younger brother, whose captivating qualities were to remain unfruitful.

Maxime Raynaud, with his inflexible gentleness, carried out his projects. He worked with Duclaux and Roux, at the Pasteur Institute, then in a small personal laboratory. Almost all of his

income went to his Grenelle dispensary. At the same time he experienced, like all of his comrades, the attractions of public life. France itself, at that time, was rent over a contest in which it was necessary, in spite of oneself, to take part. Raynaud worked with Deherme at the University in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine; he wrote also for the *Cahiers de la Quinzaine* with Péguy, for he believed that France is the greatest living example of justice and reason. He believed also that peace would reign some day, according to the evangelical promise, obliterating all frontiers, for all men of good will. . . .

The years had passed, and the ideals so dear to Maxime Raynaud were no longer the fashion. The man of forty saw his old companions in the struggle depart, some on the road to Lourdes, and others on the way to the Palais-Bourbon. Of the illusions of youth, the love of the beautiful remained and the desire to do right, a passion for the truth and a respect for science not as a vain idol, but as a means for serving man and developing himself. The study of nature, he affirmed,

had made him more humble, more patient, more disciplined. The dizziness of mysticism did not trouble him. He was gay, because his life was simple and pure. He loved men, not only from pity, but from true fraternity. He was a Frenchman, son of the eighteenth century, almost cured of his ideals, ceasing to strive after the impossible without ceasing to be generous.

His parents had not succeeded in marrying him according to their code; he had not been able to marry as his heart dictated, and he beguiled his regret of paternity by occupying himself with his little nephews, especially with Pierre, who promised to be his son by choice. Nicolette and Jean were not jealous of this influence which saved them care and anxiety.

Little Pierre kissed Simone, then let himself fall, laughing, on the carpet. Leaning against his mother, wrapped in her beautiful green crêpe skirt, he began to tell all that he had done and seen, with the pride of a boy who feels himself part of a marvellous adventure.

"Don't you know? . . . We went on the Boulevards: we saw that there weren't any little tables before the cafés, and notices were posted in the windows: 'Here we do not make change for one hundred francs.' If you want to buy something and you have one hundred francs it is not enough—without sous. We went in the streets by the side of the bank; there were a lot of men and women who stood in line for money. There were some who had taken folding chairs; and they sat down; and they ate bread and ham. . . . And we saw cabs full of trunks. And people said: 'See! there are Prussians going away. . . . We hope that we shall not have the pleasure of seeing you again! . . .' And others said: 'Perhaps we shall meet again in Berlin!'" . . .

Nicolette caressed her boy's hair:

"You had a good time, Pierrot?"

The lad replied with conviction:

"Oh! yes! . . ."

The Doctor, seated near Simone, looked complacently at his nephew. He said:

"We two have chatted as men, as citizens.

Pierrot has patriotic feelings that do him credit. He is ready to fight the Germans, but he is chivalrous. He does not wish any harm to ladies or little girls. He refuses to consider his Fräulein as an enemy."

"You have felt the pulse of Paris, Maxime?" said Simone. "Don't you think that our good city is in perfect health? A little sad, but calm and without fever."

Nicolette cried:

"What can we know of Paris? . . . It is a nervous city, capable of extraordinary sudden changes. . . . It is sad to-day, you say? Last evening, without being joyous, it was animated and curious about what was coming. I was able to judge when I was dining at the Italian restaurant with the Mongirails. We made a bet, they holding for the condemnation of Madame Caillaux and I for the acquittal. The stake was this dinner. The Mongirails paid the wager.—Well, in the dense crowd that we saw through the bow-window, there was much less agitation than on the evening of the verdict. The policeman were

paternal. People applauded the bands that passed, singing the *Marseillaise*. In the restaurant were burlesque scenes between clients who offered bank notes in payment and waiters who refused to accept them. . . . Oh! I shall remember this dinner-party, Louise Mongirail who wept in her glass of asti, thinking. . . .—I wager she wasn't thinking of her husband! . . . and Mongirail who consoled her: 'It will only be an affair of three months! Three months' campaign and a year of negotiation.' And the loving couples squeezing close together, excited by the warm night and warlike emotions! . . . Our disquietude was still able to joke and smile around tables loaded with dainties, lighted with pretty lamps, with colored shades. . . . Not one of us had the overwhelming sensation that the war was more than a word, that it was a reality of to-morrow. . . . And we diverted ourselves by listening to the many Italians who discussed with few words and many gestures. . . . A fluent word was on their lips, a word of good omen: *Neutralità! . . . neutralità! . . .*"

"Heavens!" said Maxime, "Italy does not admit that her allies have the right to engage in a war for the good pleasure of Austria."

"Louise Mongirail claims that she will turn against us, that England will not fight and that the Parisian Socialists will refuse to march."

"Your friend is a silly thing and a neurasthenic!"

"You do not fear a revolution, Maxime?"

"Nicolette, you talk like an agent of Germany. . . . I believe in the neutrality of Italy, in the support of England, and I am sure—please listen, I am sure!—that the Socialists will go to the frontier, with one accord, with all the French."

Nicolette was not convinced. She did not have exact notions about the Socialists. She pictured them as hairy men, dirty, quite eccentric, born enemies of priests and people of the world, beings who lived at the wine-merchants' and swore in the name of the Lord in the Chamber of Deputies itself. . . . Besides, she did not make any distinction between the revolutionaries and the peo-

ple she totally ignored, for she had never been in contact with any but the "worthy poor."

It was, between her and Maxime, an eternal subject of controversy. The Doctor did not hesitate to tease his aristocratic sister-in-law.

"To-morrow, if the war breaks out, the people alone will count, Nicolette. It will unite us all in one lump and you will see Joseph your footman, subaltern in the reserve, giving orders to Monsieur Mongirail, your elegant tango dancer, and to witty Monsieur Lamoignière, writer of coarse stories! . . . Joseph will teach them the strict military virtues without speaking in the third person and will show them that an ex-lackey can be a hero."

Little Pierre said suddenly in his quiet voice:

"In the subway I saw a lady that was crying. She looked at the tunnel all the time and she cried without wiping her eyes. . . ."

Nicolette stood up with one movement of her flexible body. She had grown pale under her paint.

"The women have not finished crying," she said dully.

The footman came to announce that lunch was served. Maxime demanded his niece Marianne. They told him about the crime and the punishment.

"Is she all alone in her room?"

"Absolutely alone. . . . No, Fräulein is with her."

The domestic who served the jellied eggs ventured to murmur in a respectful voice.

"I beg pardon of Madame. . . 'Mademoiselle Fräulein' is not with Mademoiselle Marianne. 'Mademoiselle Fräulein' is in the pantry where she became ill. . . ."

"What?" said Nicolette. . . . "Explain yourself! . . . Lischen is ill?"

Joseph maintained the officially inexpressive face suitable for a man servant when his employers question him in public.

"Madame must not be anxious. 'Mademoiselle Fräulein' is better. The cook gave her some medicine. She had an attack of dizziness and said that

a workman had told her that they were going to send all the Boches back to their Bocheland. He said it like that, but he did not intend to be spiteful, because . . ."

"I forbid you to frighten a poor woman. . . ."

"Oh! Madame," said Joseph, wounded in his feelings, "we know what is proper to do. The workman did not intend anything wrong."

And he added with a compassionate air that was not without irony:

"It is certainly hard enough to be a German! It is not the fault of Mademoiselle that she has such an unhappy origin and that her emperor is a blood-thirsty person. . . ."

"Tell Lischen to come and speak to me, after breakfast in the smoking-room."

When the servant had gone, Simone asked:

"You have confidence in this Lischen? . . . Where does she come from?"

"The suburbs of Freiberg in the Breisgau. She is the daughter of a school master; she has had a diploma for teaching and also for the kindergarten. She has been in the house for five years

and I have congratulated myself on her excellent character and services."

"What if she should be a spy!" said Simone smiling.

"Lischen? . . . What secret of the national defense could she learn while taking care of Pierre and Marianne? You don't want to be like the gossips who see spies everywhere?"

Joseph brought the scalloped meat—a little burned because of the patriotic emotions of the cook. No one noticed this accident. Besides, neither Maxime nor the two ladies were hungry, but Pierre, who was not watched, took two portions.

The coffee was served in the smoking-room pagoda where the dim light gave an impression of coolness. Under the influence of an atmosphere charged with electricity, Nicolette became more and more nervous. She waited impatiently for Desmoulins to call her to the telephone, and twice sent out for last editions of papers, cried in the street, which told her absolutely nothing.

"Ah!" she said, with tearful irritation. "It is harder to dread a misfortune than to endure it. . . . I should like to string the hours on a thread, bringing nearer those which will deliver us from this anxiety."

Simone was sad. She longed for her husband whom she had seen so little for several days. An exasperated longing arose in her heart to go and surprise him, and she gave herself up to this temptation which distressed her and also gave her pleasure—because she was sure of not succumbing to it.

And minutes succeeded minutes. . . . Maxime, moved by the melancholy of the young women, tried to distract them. He accentuated the optimistic note, perhaps with sincerity, perhaps to strengthen his own shaken confidence. While smoking cigarettes, and allowing them to go out in his extreme preoccupation, he began the old pacifist themes, which Monsieur Lepoultre had developed so many times in his articles and his conferences.

But in the course of his talk, Maxime was as-

tonished to hear his own voice uttering vain words, empty words which had just now been living and hereafter would be dead, so dead that they left a taste of ashes on the lips.

A strange discouragement took possession of him. He rejected the comforting illusions as he had extinguished his cigarette and he murmured:

"When it comes, France will survive. Of that I am sure. France cannot disappear. . . ."

He sustained himself with this thought and the clear sound, the powerful note of the truth remained in his spirit.

"Yes, France will continue to live. And if it is attacked, we shall defend it, all, men and women, each in our own way and with one heart and soul."

The strident ring of the telephone interrupted them.

He took one of the receivers. Nicolette took the other. . . .

Then, coming from the invisible and from a distance, a voice said:

"Hello! . . ."

Nicolette responded:

"It is you, Desmoulins? I hear . . ."

"They have brought us despatches which you will read in the five o'clock papers. . . . Germany . . ."

The voice was lost in a hubbub. . . .

"Hello! . . . Desmoulins. . . . Hello! . . . What is the matter? . . . Please answer. . . ."

The telephone operator called:

"No one answers any more. . . . The communication is cut. . . ."

VIII

A LITTLE hand pushed against the door of the smoking-room and a childish voice entreated:

"Mamma, will you please forgive me? . . . I will not be a savage any more."

Nicolette was seated in a dejected attitude. The petition of her daughter made her smile sadly. She replied:

"Come in, Marianne."

Marianne entered, dragging behind her the panting and groaning Fräulein, whom she had taken as a shield, and both of them stopped, clinging to each other.

"Fräulein cries, Mamma. . . . I went and hugged her to comfort her, but that did not comfort her. She says that she is afraid."

Marianne had bare arms, bare feet in tiny ribboned sandals. Her ringlets shone like silk interwoven with silver and gold. Her white dress

was embroidered with red apples and green foliage. Frail and dainty, quite a woman at six years, she was the incarnate child of luxury, the latest doll that women of fashion sometimes exhibit in their drawing-rooms or their automobiles.

Quite embarrassed in her rôle, she watched her anxious mother with a distrustful eye and then she turned towards the native of Baden whose large, square body shook with sobs.

"Come, Fräulein," said Nicolette sweetly, "calm yourself. No one here will do you any harm. . . . I have heard that the mechanic teased you a little and I shall scold him severely. He did not intend to offend you. You are a respectable woman and you are with me: that is enough to make you sure of being protected. . . . But we must accept the inevitable. War may be declared to-morrow. You must go back to your own country."

"Ach! I know that Madame is good. . . . It has been like my own family. And the children

are so nice! I was accustomed to being with you always. . . ."

"We shall not forget your devotion, Fräulein, but we must part. It is not your fault and it is not ours if the circumstances . . ."

"My sister has written me, that there is still a fortnight for the return journey. . . . And I do not believe that it will be dangerous to stay in France, as she says. . . ."

"There is a fortnight?"

"Ach! she knew well that we should have war. Every one knew it at Fribourg. . . . But that is not the worst."

"What more is there, Fräulein?"

The German had a red face with a small, badly formed nose and a bulging forehead, covered with freckles.

"I am going. . . . Madame doesn't know? I am going to marry Monsieur Gustave, next Christmas."

"What Monsieur Gustave?"

"Monsieur the receipt clerk of the Galeries. He is my fiancé. He will marry me next Christ-

mas. I do not want to return to Fribourg, because my father is poor. He has too many children. . . . Nine! Six daughters. . . . My sister Linda is in London; my sister Rosa is in Brussels; the three little ones are at home. My father does not need me. I shall marry Gustave."

Her tears trickled down on the bib of her apron.

"Ach! . . . it is ended now. . . ."

Lischen was not pretty in her despair. She abandoned herself to it in the insistent and unceremonious way of the Germans, that always carries with it a certain element of the ridiculous, but none of the servants wanted to smile. They understood one of the thousand little dramas—which become pure classic tragedy if a poet places them in the heart of a king—and which pass unnoticed, without beauty, in the poor difficult lives of the humble.

Lischen had been in France seven years; she had brought up Pierre and Marianne, and the bond attaching her to her home in Fribourg, to her father, to the needy sisters, to the troublesome

brothers, had slowly weakened. The German woman, tame and passive, submissive to the man, becomes denationalised quicker than the German man. For Lischen, her country was the place where she had been well received, well nourished, well treated and well paid, where she had found children to cherish and that idol: Gustave! . . . How fine he was, Monsieur the cashier of the Galeries; how fine he was, with his little cap, his blue coat with gold buttons, his money bag, his pencil behind his ear! His livery had the martial elegance of a uniform. His flowing moustache expressed all the gallant hardihood of his race! He criticised the government! He knew how to talk to ladies! He kissed beautifully! He was economical! . . . He was a Frenchman.

"I pity you, Fräulein," said Madame Raynaud. . . . Alas, all the fiancées are weeping here and in your country, and without doubt Monsieur Gustave will suffer greatly. . . . The situation for both of you is very cruel, but you must accept it. We shall part from each other affectionately

and I hope that you will be happy later, when we have the right to be happy."

In the midst of noisy sobs the Baden woman expressed her desire:

"I wish to become naturalised right away. Then I shall be French. I shall marry Gustave."

"What!" said Nicolette scandalised. "You renounce your country on the eve of a war? That would be an ugly thing, Fräulein, and Gustave would not marry you. . . . You have brothers in the German army?"

"Two," replied Lischen sniffling. . . . "My brother Karl and my brother Wilhelm. But Fritz is too little. . . ."

"Your Gustave would not like to risk killing his brothers-in-law in a combat! Forget everything that is not your country and your family. . . . Reflect, Fräulein, if your fiancé had the same idea as you, he would become a German. . . ."

"Oh! that would be lovely, Madame! If Gustave became a German. I should be able to marry him."

"What, you would not feel shame and horror for him?"

But Lischen did not hear these subtleties. She sobbed until she lost her breath, while Madame Raynaud continued her harangue. Little Marianne began to cry sympathetically and Nicolette tried vainly to dam up this double deluge, when callers were announced and delivered her from Lischen. The unfortunate sweetheart of Monsieur the cashier of the Galeries, went away dissolved in tears.

The unexpected arrivals who had put an end to this tragicomic scene were welcomed with affectionate exclamations. They were two handsome young men, sons of an old friend of the Raynauds, who almost belonged to the family. Bertrand and Lucien de Gardave had been cared for by Maxime's parents as Simone had formerly been welcomed by Monsieur Bouvet de la Monderie. They had spent their childhood in a little castle in Périgord where their father, an ardent huntsman, and their mother, ignorant and devout, lived as nobles and parsimoniously, according to

the ancient custom of the country gentlemen. One of their sisters was an Ursuline nun: another had married a well-born lieutenant with a small income, and consumed with him in a small garrison, the principal of the customary marriage portion. The third sister was always waiting for a husband. When he was fourteen years old, Bertrand de Gardave went to Paris, loaded with scapulars and lockets by his doting mother and entered Stanislaus College. His young brother joined him several years later; but while Bertrand showed an exceptional intelligence, more speculative than realistic, and a love of study that drew him to a sedentary life, Lucien cared more for sport than for books. In 1914 Bertrand was doctor of laws, connected with several philanthropic causes, and principal contributor to a new Catholic review. Lucien prepared for the entrance examinations at Saint Cyr. He followed the traditions of their family which allowed a Gardave—since the Gardaves were almost ruined—the choice of liberal careers, the army, the bar and diplomacy, to the exclusion of all the other

more lucrative ones, but, said Madame de Gardave, "sordid and mean." It happened, that in all of the family, no Gardave had ever become rich, except by an advantageous marriage. This way of obtaining fortune did not suit Bertrand. Lucien might consent to it, perhaps, when he achieved epaulettes; but at this time, he thought only of fencing and football.

They had hardly been ushered in, Bertrand kissing the hands of Nicolette and Simone, when Lucien, who was unrestrained by conventions, cried:

"Well, we're in for it!"

"Oh!" said Maxime, "you expect it! . . . The decree of mobilisation has not yet appeared."

"No, but it will to-morrow or the day after. . . . No one doubts it. . . . You know that we were to spend the vacations in England with our friends the Harrisons? I come from telling them that the party is deferred—after the victory! . . . And I have written the same, word for word:

'Dear Harry and Bob, before long we shall meet on the field of battle!' "

"But in case of war, you will not go, Lucien," said Simone. "You are too young."

The youth resisted her.

"I shall be eighteen years old in September. I shall enlist! and Bob and Harry will enlist too in the English army."

"If England fights with us."

"You doubt it?"

"Sir Edward Grey does not give me his intimate confidences. . . . I believe that England has the same interest as we in hindering the German hegemony; I believe that they will lend us the co-operation of their fleet, but as to sending us an army . . ."

"It is curious! Yes, it is curious and disturbing to realise this scepticism of the French," said Lucien. . . . "I have been four times to England for vacations. I know that the English are serious people, very sure, very faithful to their promises! . . . Ah! if you knew Harry and Bob! . . . Such boys! . . ."

Maxime wanted to explain that the English government must consult public opinion before making any important decision, and public opinion in England was formed more slowly than in France. . . . No doubt, our friends across the Channel do not yet realise the situation and the possible necessity of Continental military action. . . .

But the impetuous young man did not hear.

"I tell you; Harry and Bob will enlist and I shall, too. That will be a magnificent thing."

"You," said Bertrand, "will do what Papa wishes."

Lucien turned purple.

"Do you take me for a gamin?"

The idea of war excited him. Passionately devoted to physical culture, very proud of his muscles, despising intellectual effort and sentimental complications, he had resolved to consecrate his life to action, without knowing very well what the action would be for. Turn about, he had dreamed of being Georges Carpentier or Garros; he had pictured himself exploring in the for-

est or manufacturing in a new country. The poetry of the aeroplane and the submarine, of peril and of victory, thrilled the imagination of this youth who read little, who had never loved a woman and who thought himself prosaic and determined. He had decided at last to be an officer—in the Colonies, naturally—and he imagined himself as a rival of Barbatier and of Gouraud.

In spite of his youth he was robust; but with his full and rosy cheeks, his white teeth, his velvet eyes, and his glossy black hair, he looked so fresh and young that it made him very miserable. He envied the twenty-five years, the heavier profile and the short moustache of his brother. . . .

"You think," he said in a tone of defiance, "that I shall spend the summer in Périgord, between Papa and Mamma, while the others fight? . . . I am young, I seem even younger than my age, because"—his cheeks flushed—"because I am too good-looking. . . . I have a baby's expression. That disgusts me, but I am not willing to

grow a beard to make me look older . . . and then, is it the face that counts? What makes a soldier is muscles, endurance, and courage. . . . I have all that! . . . And besides, for a fair comparison, my biceps are different from Bertrand's! . . . Feel my arms, Madame Davesnes, feel, I beg you! . . ."

The older brother exclaimed with annoyance:

"Do stop, Lucien, you are a nuisance! Madame, excuse this child, excited by the smell of powder in the air."

"He is a little Gallic cock!" said Simone.

Lucien protested:

"Child! . . . I am as good as you! . . . I am a better walker and a better shot than you. If Papa will allow me to enlist—and I shall demand it of him by telegram!—you will see what I can do. . . . To have such a wonderful chance, and not to be where they are fighting, where there is danger and glory! I tell you: I should go mad! . . . At first, there are never enough soldiers. France has need of all the French. Madame Simone approves of me; I see that in her eye . . .

and her husband will approve of me, I am sure! . . . I shall go to see him. He will advise me. I shall enlist in the artillery."

"I, too," cried Pierre, "I want to enlist; Mamma, if I am too little to be an artilleryman, I shall be child of the regiment!"

During this time, Marianne had climbed on the Doctor's knee.

"Tell me what you have done?" said the uncle. "It seems that you have bitten your brother in order to take a cake away from him? Then, you were put out of civilisation. . . . No one speaks to you. . . . You are to have dinner alone?"

"Quite alone."

"You were like a little savage or a beast. It is terrible!"

The little one repeated placidly:

"Oh, yes! . . . It is terrible! . . ."

"At least, do you know what it is, civilisation?"

"Oh! Yes! . . . I know."

"What is it, then?"

Marianne looked at her uncle with affectionate contempt.

"Don't you know? . . . Civilisation is . . . is the people who are polite . . . who don't take things that are not theirs . . . who don't bite their brothers."

She thought a moment.

"Who don't say bad words. . . ."

But the definition did not satisfy her. An essential expression was lacking. . . . Marianne wriggled a little, put out her tongue and ended by finding what she sought:

. . . "And behave well at the table . . . you must eat properly. Mamma told me that."

The child pressed her coaxing head on the bearded face of the doctor and lowered her voice, as if telling a great secret:

"She is a nice person, Fräulein! Well, she eats her sausage with her fingers and when she swallows she makes a noise. . . ."

"Little mischief!" said Maxime, smiling. He put Marianne back again, upright on his knee:

"Run and find Fräulein! . . . Comfort her!

To-morrow, you will not see her any more. . . . She will be able to say in her country that we were good to her to the last. . . ."

Marianne ran away, on the tips of her toes. Lucien de Gardave said thoughtlessly:

"Why are our French families so foolish as to have foreign nurses? I learned English and German when I was twelve years old and I flatter myself that I speak them pretty well, especially English. . . . But my nurse brought me up in French."

"And also, in Périgord dialect," said Nicolette.

The young man began to laugh heartily.

"The Périgord dialect is a poor cousin of French and there are family traits between them. My nurse gave me a touch of accent revealing my origin of which I am proud. But, dear Madame —you have told me yourself—when your Pierre went to school at nine, they dictated this phrase to him: 'The little boy goes to breakfast.' Pierre, instigated by the memory of his Fräulein, wrote: *'The litle boy goes to Frühfast.'* At his age, I

made many mistakes in spelling, but they showed the influence of my own country."

This discussion of comparative philology annoyed Nicolette, and Bertrand, who noticed it, created a diversion by speaking of Jean Raynaud.

"His mother, whom we have just left, is extremely uneasy. She persuades herself, against all probability, that Jean is no longer at Pontresina and that he was obliged to go to the Tyrol. I believe that he did intend to go there. Did he absolutely give up this project?"

"Apparently, yes," responded Nicolette. "His letter, dated Monday, does not permit a suspicion of change in his itinerary. But Jean always follows his whims. . . . He went, perhaps, Tuesday or Wednesday, alone or not alone. . . . He meets, sometimes, pleasant fellow travellers. . . ."

"This time, Nicolette, you are the one to say foolish things," said Maxime.

"Would it be better if I did them?"

"My dear little sister, your husband will be

on the firing line to-morrow. Think of that. That will calm your nerves."

Nicolette bit her lips until they bled.

"Come with me to our parents," said Maxime. "We shall encourage them to have patience and this day will be less hard for them. Think of the terrible strain that they may have to endure!"

"You are right, Maxime. . . . Poor old dears! We must not abandon them. . . . I must dress myself right away. We shall take away the children."

This tender spontaneity of Nicolette compensated for her attack of sulks and bad humour. Maxime was moved and thought severely of Jean, that privileged person who foolishly ruined his own happiness.

Bertrand de Gardave went to sit near Simone, on the violet satin divan.

"I intended to write you and wish you an agreeable vacation, for I did not hope to see you for several months. All of our projects are suspended at present. . . . What are you going to

do? You will go, no doubt, to Plessis-l'Étang?"

"Who knows? . . ."

"You never think about yourself."

"I think about my husband, of my friends. . . ."

Bertrand asserted:

"The aeroplane factory will be taken for the army?"

"Certainly."

"Then, Lieutenant Davesnes will stay near you."

"All the officers will not be retained at the factory."

"I hope that they will leave Monsieur Davesnes at his post for the present. I desire it because of friendship to you, who will suffer too much from his departure."

Simone said quickly:

"My husband will be like all the French, ready to obey, and he will accept the post that is given to him at the factory or in a regiment. . . ."

"Oh!" said the young man. "I am a clumsy person. I have agitated you. . . ."

"I am very calm," responded Simone. "But I

do not wish—not yet—to ask myself a question meaning: 'The lot is cast. It is war!' . . . Leave me the benefit of the doubt."

Bertrand de Gardave looked at her, so touching in her anxiety. He admired the ashen gold of her fluffy hair, the delicacy of a blue vein on her temple, the indefinable color of her eyes, this beauty in half-tone, that did not dazzle, but enchanted. What attraction in this bloom and modesty! Delicate Simone, Princess of Racine descended to the mediocrity of a bourgeois existence and remaining royal through elegance of feeling, and nobility that is a great passion. It was the perfect flower of the race, the rose of France, delicate and perfumed, that has no equal under any other sky. How greatly Bertrand preferred her to the brilliant Nicolette! How he preferred her to all women, to all!

He thought sometimes that he would have been happier if she had been less happy, because he could have consoled her, but he could do nothing —or almost nothing—for a woman so completely loved. He did not consider that Simone might

have complained because she lived without luxury, for he judged her by himself, and he knew that she had chosen the better part. And without analyzing the sentiment she inspired and from which he suffered to a certain extent, he persuaded himself that everything was right as it was, that it pleased him to have Simone just as nature and destiny had made her, fragile and brave, passionately faithful and so happy that she discouraged desire.

At twenty-four, he had never loved any woman, and the mysticism to which he was irresistibly inclined had nearly always saved him from light connections. He was a Catholic and lived his religion, and, while his character was very noble, he did not have that simplicity which makes virtue easy to the saints. His excessively scrupulous conscience marred all joy for him. Enrolled among the young men who intended to restore the old discipline in France, he blamed those who did not begin with their own lives.

Now, he felt the storm coming in which he would be swept away, an atom in a whirling dust

of humanity. To-morrow, private lives would be lost in the collective life of the nation and all that gives value to youth, all that men desire to possess before death—health, force, fortune, the joys of the spirit, strong friendship and the blessing that contains all the others: love! . . . all that had no more worth, had not even any meaning, all that did not amount to anything.

But for one moment more, these joys existed, that he had recently neglected in order to acquire others, less sweet and more grand. . . . Why then did Bertrand regard these treasures of life, forever unattainable, with a sort of retrospective longing, bitter as the helplessness of an old man? . . .

Temptation of the evil spirit, weakness of the heart and flesh! . . . Bertrand de Gardave endured the fierce inward assault as he would endure to-morrow the attack of the enemy. He looked at a bunch of carnations on the table, the books in the red lacquer case, an exquisite statuette and the young woman in her lovely bloom, the personification of love! . . . . By a powerful

effort of the will, he substituted other images: the study opening toward the starry night, the lamp, the friendly books, the photographs of the *Sibyls* of Michael Angelo, overlooked by an old Jansenist crucifix with raised arms. He recalled the instructor that he had loved, theologians and philosophers, and the glorious conflict of ideas, and this intellectual atmosphere, dry as the air of mountain-tops, that he had breathed with giddiness. . . . This recollection soothed him. He thanked God who had permitted him to live a pure and serious youth and to hope at twenty-five years for glory and death like a double crown. . . .

Nicolette reappeared, dressed in white, and wearing a hat quivering with quantities of oats. She asked:

"Simone, Lucien, Bertrand, can't I take you on your way? There is room for you in the limousine."

"Leave me then in the Rue de La-Boétie," said Lucien. "I am going to see one of my comrades, the captain of our football team . . . a fine type! Class of 1916, like me!"

Simone said that she wished to walk and that she could take the underground quite easily at some station.

Bertrand de Gardave offered to go with her.

IX

IT was already declining, this day which would bring peace or war.

It was half-past four. The sun and the fog after struggling since morning faded together in the heavy air. The mists hung low over Paris and their billowy masses, penetrated by diffused light, seemed to absorb the rays in their soft, white depths.

"Let us go as far as the Boulevard des Italiens," proposed Bertrand, "to buy *Le Temps* as soon as it reaches the kiosques."

Simone assented. They followed the slope of the Rue de Rome and noticed in the square before the station dozens and dozens of vehicles, hurrying from the converging streets. The rush was caused by the exodus of strangers and of country people. The young man amused himself by recognising, from their appearance, the disappointed tourists, the "cowards" haunted by

fear of revolutions, and also the good people with dull brains, who had not seen, understood or imagined anything, going simply to spend their vacations in some "cheap little hole."

On the Boulevard, the enormous crowd, dense, slow, covered the sidewalks, reached the roadway, and its surging tide surrounded the automobiles, autobusses and the groups of police. A patrol of the Garde Républicaine passed. The splendid mien of the cavalry, the flash of the helmets and the waving of horse hair, recalled vaguely to their minds pictures of the Roman troops. Applause resounded. A cry arose: "Hurrah for the army!" The police officers raised their white sticks to block the autobusses. The human surge slipped through the openings. When they could not see the guards any longer, the space closed and the silent crowd moved on, almost colorless, in spite of its summer garments, between the high banks of houses, gay with flags.

There were as many people as on a fête day or in time of riots, but never had joy or rage brought about this harmony of feeling which gave to the

French of all ages and all ranks, one spirit and almost one aspect. Because all of them had the same thought, all had the same expression. The faces, so various in our race, lost their individual character and revealed an indefinable "family resemblance." An implied cordiality sprang up, in the jostling without rudeness, in the impromptu dialogue, in the exchange of glances between women thinking of their children, between men thinking of their country. The shops exposed articles of luxury for sale. The Morris columns announced plays, sketches with ballets and light songs. It seemed very far away already. Some little tables had reappeared on the terraces of cafés, but the people seated before their slowly warming beer forgot to drink.

Above the grey roofs and the parched plane trees, the sky piled its white, billowy clouds more heavily. Uncertain as life, after the alternation of sun and shade, brooded the gathering storm, the breaking of which would be almost a relief to the trees withering from thirst, to the people trembling with exhausting agony.

The rumbling of trucks, the buzzing of automobiles, increasing and diminishing, the trumpet signals, the ringing of bells and the murmur of innumerable voices and footsteps, all the uproar of Paris, now failed to reach the senses of those beings who continued to exist in a sort of calm hallucination. They had the sensation of a silence like that which announces great cosmic phenomena. When there is to be an earthquake, the wind dies down, the animals are dumb, and the immobility of death precedes the first shock. So, waiting for the moment of the convulsion, the people viewed life as suspended about them. What movement still continued seemed an effect of acquired force, the play of mechanism still acting an instant after the cessation of its central motor power. And the confidence created by habit and adaptation, the confidence of the solidity and the stability of a certain known order of things, the security given by laws, customs, religions, the walls of the city, the protecting army, solemn agreements between peoples, suddenly gave place to the idea of the ephemeral and of

the provisional. . . . The entire nation was about to enter the unknown.

Bertrand de Gardave guided Simone. She followed him docilely . . . protected by him against the surging of the crowds. He said to her:

"Let us cross."

She crossed the street behind him, starting when he pushed away the head of a horse which touched her. He said to her:

"Stay here, the news-boys will pass here first. . . ."

She waited near him, before the window of a provision shop. In front was a newspaper kiosque. On the sidewalk opposite was the façade of the Crédit Lyonnais, rich with heavy sculpture. The clock showed that it was now five.

Suddenly the waiting people were moved. A current carried them on the same side, towards the corner of the boulevard, and of the street where *Le Temps* had its office. The news-boys loaded with damp, unfolded papers, ran silently

in the direction of the kiosque. The crowd surrounded them. Trembling hands held out sous and carried off papers like booty. Simone moved back, but Bertrand, springing forward among the first, returned with a paper, while other carriers at last reached the besieged kiosque, threw their packages at the dealer and disappeared in all directions.

Bertrand rumpled the paper as he touched it. His fingers shook. He looked for the latest despatches on the bottom of the sixteenth page. Simone had taken his arm which she pressed unconsciously. An old woman tried to read over their shoulders. . . . They heard Bertrand's voice.

He read:

State of war in Germany.

Berlin, July 31.

A special edition of the Berliner Tageblatt *announces that this morning the Emperor, by virtue of article 68 of the constitution of the empire, has decreed that because of information of the*

menacing military preparations of Russia, Germany is in a "state of war" (Kriegszustand).

This measure is not exactly the same as mobilisation, but it places the entire Empire under military authority.

Mobilisation will probably be announced this evening.

The Emperor returns to Berlin this afternoon.

Some one said:

"I do not understand, Monsieur. . . . Will you allow me to see. . . . Thank you. . . . That will do . . . it says: Preparations for war. . . . Thank you, Monsieur."

Another voice:

"Here . . . look. . . . They have sent: *The threatening notes to London and to Paris. . . .*"

Another voice:

"And we? . . . and we? . . . What can we do?"

These words emerged from the indistinct clamor: "Their Emperor . . . England . . . a premeditated coup. . . . The Alliance. . . .

They have known it for three days. . . . France will remain. . . . France has no fear. . . . France . . . France . . . France. . . ."

The sacred name was on all lips. They did not cry it out. They did not realise that they spoke it. It came like a mother's name to the lips of soldiers who are about to die. . . . Then silence fell again.

X

BERTRAND and Simone continued through the silent crowd. They no longer noticed the amusing and banal decorations of the Parisian boulevard. Like all of the French, they had not been able to estimate the slow encroachment of the shadow, which had increased for three days and was now at its zenith. A dark cloud brooded over France and from its gloomy and cruel mass appeared the anticipated spectre: war.

Paris looked at it steadily, without consternation, with a remnant of stupor and a vague feeling of deliverance. The people realised more and more distinctly that the nightmare of waiting had been the severest trial. Now, they would awaken in a new France; they began to know, to understand, to act and to suffer, instead of keeping the ears strained and the heart beating. The transition would be short between the bad dream and the heroic awakening. One moment more to shake

off the old chains, to allow the life of yesterday to drop behind; a moment more of thought and emotion. . . . Then would come the rising en masse, enthusiasm, and all spirits, relieved because the sacrifice was accomplished, would march towards destiny to the song of the *Marseillaises*.

Bertrand de Gardave said:

"I should prefer . . ."

Simone could not help whispering:

"Oh! Say that we shall be victorious!"

He responded aloud:

"We will be!"

His strong voice resounded in the silence and passers-by who heard it turned around. He repeated:

"We will be victorious by the force of right and the force of arms. I am not afraid."

On his clear-cut, dark face the traces of anxiety were effaced. His youth bloomed in a lovely smile of certitude. He looked straight before him, instead of looking at the blonde woman, the dear friend whose presence, an hour earlier, had shown him more than he wished the charm of

living. He was already freed. Already he had started on the high-road where chanting victory would lead, by thousands, the young men of France. From the lover and the mystic the soldier emerged.

He asked:

"Where will you go now, Madame?"

Simone wished to go home as quickly as possible.

"I will call a taxicab," said Bertrand, "and you will forgive me if I do not go with you. I must write my parents and put certain affairs in order. . . . I suppose that the decree of mobilisation will be published to-morrow. I hope so. . . . *Le Temps* says that we have not imitated the example of Germany—it is not necessary for a defensive military measure to be interpreted as a provocation—but this measure, they say, may cause an immediate clash. . . . Every Frenchman must hold himself in readiness."

"You voluntarily anticipate the call to arms, my dear Bertrand! . . ."

"At least, I should respond to it among the first."

"And your father, your mother? . . . What courage they will need!"

"Yes, for them, it will be hard. . . ."

The brows of the young man, his expressive mouth, became anxious.

"Very hard. . . . But they are good French people and good Christians. . . . And then, they will have my sisters. . . . Jeanne, when her husband leaves, will return home with her children; Madeleine, the poor girl! who hoped to marry one of our cousins, will forget her suffering in filial tenderness. . . . They will combine with the others, as all families will do. . . ."

They waited a quarter of an hour, at the corner of the Faubourg Montmartre and of the Boulevard. Not a free automobile passed. No doubt they avoided the crowded spots, and the few that were to be seen were going to the stations.

"I shall go to the Bourse Station," said Madame Davesnes. "Don't come with me

any farther, my friend, your time is limited."

She held out her hand to Bertrand:

"Don't go without seeing us again."

"No, certainly not. . . ."

"Until to-morrow, perhaps!"

"To-morrow, surely. Be brave."

She smiled sadly and departed. The young man saw her lovely silhouette, her blue dress, her little hat trimmed with white wings, disappearing in the crowd and he thought:

"May she be spared misfortune!"

Then he went his way.

Like the crowds in the streets, the crowds massed in the cars of the subway were stupefied and silent. They spoke in low voices; they read the papers eagerly. On the faces of the women the startled grief was tearless. Those who spoke, men with white beards, decorated with the ribbon of the Legion of Honor, well dressed, were listened to with a respectful interest. Some of them carried leather portfolios. They were such men as the crowd imagines to be bankers and lawyers.

In grave and modulated tones they regretted that Russia had not finished its strategic railway; they estimated the respective armies of the allied nations and compared the English fleet with the German fleet. Habitually well-bred and discreet, they said nothing of their personal emotions. The passengers of another social rank, more impulsive, when they were squeezed between their neighbors for the distance of three stations, confessed naïvely their anxiety as husbands and fathers.

One heard:

"The mobilisation will be posted this evening."

"No, to-morrow."

"Italy?"

"Against us?"

"Never. . . . Against Austria."

"The alliance is defensive. The *casus foederis* does not hold."

"Mr. Asquith should have made a declaration to-day to the House of Commons."

"I tell you that Italy will leave us to pull the chestnuts out of the fire. . . ."

And they always reverted anxiously to England, the prudent and reticent friend.

The Chatelet. The white-haired men left. A talkative woman climbed in, burdened with a basket, then a group of very young men. The spirit of the populace entering with them, brought a little vivacious chatter. Continuing a talk, begun without doubt on the quay, the big woman began to say:

"They want us to go and we will."

"Not you, huh!"

"When there aren't any more men, my boy, of course the women will go."

The young fellows turned around, and striking their chests, affirmed that they would gladly take the women.

"It would be gayer."

"If we can choose, I prefer the young ones."

A man in a jacket, without a collar, and wearing a dirty hat, protested.

He growled like a fox-terrier that was being teased.

"Women? . . . You don't want them! . . .

Such a good chance to be a little comfortable among men. . . ."

The young men laughed:

"Oh! *La! La!* Monsieur is sick of it all! He hasn't any luck with his sweetheart. A little, well-behaved hen in our quarters would be jolly, just the same!"

"There are some women just as good as men!" said the crone. . . . "For instance, Joan of Arc! You understand that I, with a gun, am not afraid of a Prussian."

She rolled back her sleeves, and showed her arms, hardened by work and reddened by washing powders. Her glance called her audience to witness. . . . The young men expressed their sympathy in forcible language. The disagreeable man had retired to the extreme corner of his seat. He grumbled:

"Go and nurse your babies and take care of your little children."

"Children. . . . I have them all right! and I am quite able to take care of them, what's more,"

smartly replied the rival of Madame Angot.[1] . . . If that didn't make you tired! . . . Cheese face! Magot! Reformed rake! He doesn't like me, the old wreck! . . . I tell you that a Prussian wouldn't make me afraid, any more than my dead father; he belonged to the National Guard in '70, his feet frozen on the ramparts, and he had the medal of the old combatants. . . . I am only a woman, but I tell you over the ashes of my father, that I am sorry enough to be one. . . . But I have a husband who will go to represent the Boujiron family. And my oldest boy will go with the class '15 if it is called out."

"What does your husband do?"

"He is a corporal, Monsieur. . . . He is market porter, Boujiron, and you understand, a husky one. . . . Here's Saint Michel! I must get out. . . . Good-bye to you all."

A jovial man shouted:

"Compliments to Boujiron!"

With the woman, the feeble attempts at gaiety

[1] Mme. Angot, a popular type taken from a musical comedy "La Fille de Mme. Angot" by Ch. Lecoq (1872), proverbially coarse and unrefined.

and a sort of big plebeian optimism, not without its influence on depressed spirits, disappeared. Conversations were whispered. Women looked at each other. Their staring eyes expressed:

"My son! . . . My husband! . . ."

And the eyes of strangers, filled with tears, responded:

"My husband! . . . My son! . . ."

When Madame Davesnes found herself again on the Avenue, the cries of newspaper men assailed her. Their barking of distorted words broke the silence which hovered over the Faubourg, as it did in the centre of the city.

A young couple hurried along in front of Simone: She recognised Alexandre Fréchette and his little friend. They walked close together, shoulder to shoulder. The sculptor had put his arm under the arm of his model. He said to her:

"You will give me one sitting to-morrow morning. . . . And then, finished or not finished, the good woman will stay as she is. . . . They will say it is done by Rodin, especially if I break a hand and if I smash her nose. . . ."

"Don't do that, Alexandre!"

"It is to make you laugh. Laugh at once. . . . Make a nice smile for monsieur. . . . Say that if I am not able to concern myself with it, you will go to the moulder. . . . You will superintend the moulding finely. . . . He knows you!"

"Alexandre."

"Wipe your little nose. . . . You can cry all alone at home. . . That will keep my clay from drying."

Simone stopped before Madame Anselme's shop to buy the last edition of the papers, appearing at six o'clock.

The stationer, a ripe Ceres in a garnet dress, was sewing lace on the collar of a blouse. Her face was fresh and tranquil.

"Since I have the pleasure of seeing you, Madame Davesnes, I shall beg a favor from you. . . . I asked Marie Pourat to speak to you about it, but that very reasonable woman is not like herself any more, her brain has been so empty since morning. . . . It is about the little Teyssèdre girls, the twins of a printer who lives in my

house. . . . A man who is everything that is good. . . . It is too bad that he may die with consumption! . . . A lady took the little ones in her educational settlement, and they were going the 4th of August near Pont-à-Mousson. . . . Then the mother came to see me this morning to say: 'I don't care to have the children go there. . . . It isn't a safe place. . . .' And why? On account of the war. . . . I argued with her a little about it, this person, but they all have their own ideas. Isn't it so? Then at noon, I saw Marie Pourat who said to me: 'Perhaps Madame Davesnes can place the children. She knows ladies who are busy with this sort of thing.' "

"I understand," said Simone, "that I am to give you some information."

She remembered that a farmer of Plessis-l'Étang had taken in a dozen little Parisians at the expense of the "*Œuvre des Colonies.*"

"It is not urgent, Madame. . . . Thank you. All the same, as I said, the air of the Vosges is better."

Simone surveyed the peaceful paper seller, among the journals which told of the worst fears.

"But, Madame Anselme, the Vosges is the frontier."

"Well?"

"If the Germans cross it?"

Madame Anselme said gently:

"Don't believe what the papers say. Monsieur Lepoultre has explained to me that it is all false news and not later than two o'clock, I sold a box of paper to another client who is in affairs, who said to me: 'It is all little intrigues of the Jews.' Madame, I sell papers, but I don't read them any more. It makes my blood run cold, especially because I am worried about my son and the examination he is to pass to-morrow: in philosophy. Monsieur Brunschwig will examine him at the Sorbonne. . . . Ah! if my son succeeds as he deserves, I shall pay for a trip to Normandy—as I have reached my age without ever having seen the ocean! . . ."

XI

THE street was almost deserted. Before the Gouge grocery, the housekeepers no longer stood in line and the boy placed as a sentinel before the vegetables and the boxes of fruit, stuck his melancholy nose in *l'Intransigeant*. The florist, Mademoiselle Florence, who gossiping tongues said had a liaison with a very rich young man, was not seen on the threshold of her attractive shop, surrounded by roses in pots and ferns like a Madonna of May. Mademoiselle Florence was visible inside, where leaning on a counter, she wrote a letter with ink quite diluted with tears, for this unvirtuous creature had a sentimental little heart. Since four o'clock, the manager of the Maggi Dairy had closed her shop, because a stone had grazed its blue painted front. The masons still worked in the woodyard, but they did not whistle now.

Meanwhile, some boys hopping on one foot,

played hopscotch with pebbles, and three little girls in black aprons, with red or green ribbon belts designating the various classes of the primary school, jumped rope, singing. Two of them held the ends of the rope which they turned grandly, and their playmate, very serious, jumped in one spot, feet together and arms stretched out. Her little braid, plaited in one strand, hitting against her apron, seemed to mark the time.

Madame Miton had cried since morning, in an arm-chair. She roused herself to return to Simone the catalogue of a large store which sold "articles for travelling" at a bargain. The young woman was moved by the sad face, that looked discolored and almost parboiled from crying.

"Be brave, Madame Miton," she said. "Perhaps something unexpected will happen to-morrow. . . ."

"Oh! Madame, even Monsieur Lepoultre hasn't any more hope. He is very much depressed. And his wife has gone to bed. . . . Monsieur Mélinier has just returned. His automobile is still in the court. He said to me as he passed: 'They will

mobilise to-morrow.' He knows many things. Monsieur Mélinier: he knows all the ministers. . . . There must be a reason: we did not want war; we have an easy conscience, as Monsieur Lepoultre says, but we can't become Prussians. France is France. Each one must do what he can. . . . Only, it is hard, Madame, it is hard for the mothers."

"It is hard for all the women."

"It is heart-rending. It isn't because we are cowards, Madame Davesnes, but when we have brought a child into the world and when we have nourished it and when we have brought it up by hard work just until it was a man, and when they say to you: 'Now, give him so that he may be killed, and you are perhaps to be all alone in your old age, there is nothing left for you. . . .' It is too much to bear. It is worse for you than to die yourself. . . . Ah! Blessed Saviour! If there were women in the government, war would be ended! It is the soldiers who make the battles, but it is the women who make the soldiers. . . . Between you and me, we always think about

saving our children. I cannot think that a German mother has a different heart from mine! There are not two ways of bringing a child into the world, and not two ways for him to leave it, and not two ways of suffering when we lose him. Nature is everywhere the same. . . ."

The cry of distracted maternity, of naked and savage instinct, resounded through Simone's whole being. The old concierge with grey hair, in the rooms furnished with mahogany, seemed to her a symbolic figure of the Mater Dolorosa. No doubt, at this moment, despatches running on the telegraph wires, or sent on air waves, were carrying the same news to France, Germany, and Russia. Everywhere, the women who had not wished to believe in the catastrophe so incomprehensible to their simple minds, were brutally crushed before the reality. . . . Everywhere. And the women of the Russian huts, primitive souls who knew nothing of the universe, and the prolific German women who lived in subjection to men, and the French women passionately devoted to their sons, all, submitting to the law,

faithful to their duty but equally tortured, uttered the same cry, the unavailing cry of the mothers which, from the time of Hecuba and Rachel, resounds eternally from age to age.

Madame Miton wiped her eyes a long time. She sighed as she listened to Simone's sympathetic words, and to excuse herself, she stammered out:

"One loses one's head when one suffers! . . . One says things, without thinking, because it is a relief! . . . But, it is certain, Madame Davesnes, that we do not want to become Prussians."

Fighting against further tears, she recovered her sense of professional duty.

"Ah! Madame, you are so good, and you understand so well how to cheer me that I could stay here an hour talking to you! And I forgot to tell you that Monsieur Davesnes telephoned from the factory. He asked if you had returned. I said that you had not."

Simone ran to the telephone booth, a sort of dark box which occupied an angle of the staircase, near the elevator. It took ten long minutes to get the connection. From the factory, they

replied that Monsieur Davesnes was in the workshop and that they would bring him.

The sound of the bell called Simone at last.

François spoke:

"It is you, my dear? I called you half an hour ago. I wanted to know how the afternoon had gone, and if you had read the evening paper. . . ."

"I know the news."

"Germany is in a state of war."

"I know it. . . ."

"France will mobilise."

"And you, you, tell me, where are you going? Do you know what will become of you? I thought that you would remain there, that you wanted to inform me. . . ."

"No, Simone, I don't know anything. . . . The manager would like to have me stay . . . but there are too many here and in my case . . ."

"You prefer to go?"

"It is not a question of preference. . . . They do not consult me, my dearie. That is settled! . . ."

He found difficulty in speaking. His voice which had been lowered so that he could not be heard in neighboring offices, was weakened still more by defective apparatus and she lost the force and the resonance of a living voice. It seemed to come from far away, from another world. In the booth which was dark as a tomb, this feeling of infinite distance and unreality completed Simone's misery. It seemed to her that her husband was leaving her, and each word of his beloved voice, instead of making her strong, grieved her. Deafened by the wild beating of her heart, she almost cried out with distress.

François questioned her:

"You are well? You have good courage?"

"Yes."

"I was uneasy about you and yet, Heaven knows that I have been preoccupied enough today in many ways!"

"My François, you thought of me, in spite of all."

"Does that surprise you, naughty child? . . . I must say good-bye. Some one wants me."

The voice died away in the almost imperceptible buzz of the vibrations, Simone hung up the receiver. A distress which had taken hold of her persisted and yet she was happy because her husband, on a day like this, had retained his thought for her, the same loving and protecting solicitude with which he had watched over her for two years.

Marie Pourat had set the table in the tiny dining-room.

"Madame," she said, on seeing Simone, "I put everything on the cloth, the dinner and the dessert. There are radishes, butter, a paté, cold meat, vegetable salad and a cherry cream. I should be glad if Madame would permit me not to serve it this evening and allow me to go."

"Why, Marie?"

"My husband expects me."

"Ah! Yes!" said Simone. . . . "I understand. You may go."

The woman with thin arms and the ant's face did not cry. An indomitable will animated her wiry frame and her spirit was mastered to con-

trol her grief. Marie Pourat was one of those who know how to suffer hunger, cold, fatigue, solitude, and deception; who bear their children without cries, bringing up their sons hardily, supplying the place of the absent father and die painfully, in silence.

So rough and large-hearted, she misunderstood affected and delicate ladies, but she loved Simone, and the extreme weariness of the young woman made her sympathetic:

"If I could, I should stay. I am sorry to leave Madame. Poor little thing. I shall wait until Monsieur returns."

Simone refused.

"Go, Marie. This evening we need to be with our families."

"Ah! Madame understands all! . . . To-day, they told me that Germany had mobilised. . . . Then I went to the plumber's. . . . It was a notion I had. I wanted to see my husband. I could not believe the truth until he told me with his own mouth. . . . Madame Anselme, who was so afraid, this morning, made fun of me. . . . I

let her talk. I went, I walked into the workshop. . . . Ah! What kind of a song do you think I heard? All the men who were there talked about nothing but cannon and machine guns, and they chattered about manœuvres, and ranks and generals and aeroplanes! And one who had served his term in the navy explained about submarines. . . . Anthime saw me. He said to me: 'What do you want? Is the grease on fire, or is Poincaré expecting me?' I didn't say anything. He looked at me. . . . 'Go!' he said. 'This is no place for you. Each one has his work. We don't want whining women around! That upsets the men. We are talking about the army. You wouldn't understand.' I left. He ran after me and said very gently: 'Cheer up, my Marie, and ask your mistress to let you off. Keep the children with you. I'll go home instead of going to the wine-shop. I swear it. . . .' And then he said besides: 'Stop at the shoemaker's. . . .' It wasn't a joke. He had ordered his army shoes! It is all just like my Anthime, Madame!"

She untied the strings of her apron and folded it carefully.

"I paid the washerwoman's bill. She gave me a new five-franc bill for change. The coarse salt is almost out. I bought three kilos ahead. . . . Until to-morrow, Madame! If Madame could force herself to eat a little; this is not the time to be sick. Women will have to work when the men are gone. It is wrong to cry. That weakens the nerves. We mustn't discourage the men. They know very well that we are suffering! They must revenge us on the Prussians!"

XII

AFTER six o'clock the street belonged to the children.

The agony which enfolded the city still spared their buoyant spirits. No more concierges were sitting on the door-steps of their houses as if they were benevolent onlookers; no more tradesmen too anxious to drive away wandering boys and intrusive dogs by threats and invectives. A mysterious power divided the grown people from the children who lived by themselves with their little joys and little griefs. Free, the boys hopping with one foot on the hop-scotch squares enlarged their kingdom. They shoved their quoits of round flint from house number 32 to the first boxes of the Gouge grocery. Farther on, the little girls turned their rope, singing. On one of the benches of the circular *Place* in the distance, two young people—Daphnis and Chloé of the suburbs

—sat close together talking softly, a tableau of the eternal idyll.

At half-past six the rascals gathered their quoits and, for sport, hit the fence covered with notices. The manifesto of the Socialist candidate received the largest number of missiles, but that of the Radical candidate, of which there were still some scraps, served as a trophy for the assailants. The discolored paper was torn away in tatters and rolled into balls. These they threw into the stone-cutter's yard, to excite the fury of the masons, a fury which the little brats waited for with delicious terror. But the workmen were not annoyed. Dragging their shoes, white with plaster, they emerged without noticing the hurried flight and fear of the scattering gamins. They were thoughtful and spoke seriously, and the strong wine of the phrases of the demagogue did not seem to mount to their brains any longer.

The oldest, son of one who had made the commune (of 1871), told about the war, the siege, the insurrection, Trochu, Thiers and the men of Versailles, as seen by his childish eyes.

He said:

"No, it's not the same time any more nor the same thing. The Empire wanted the war, but to-day, who wishes it? . . . Neither you nor I, nor any of the French. . . . You speak of the capitalists? . . . They must ascertain if it is for their interest, now. . . . In Germany, yes, they go with the militarist Prussians. They are responsible to the international proletariat. But in France, this time, they were all agreed in wishing to remain at peace. . . ."

"On the condition that they should not be worried every two or three years," said one of the younger men. . . .

The man who had called for the intervention of Jaurès, in the morning, returned to his idea. He still hoped that the voice of the great French leader would find an echo in Berlin, and he imagined enormous meetings in the industrial towns of Germany, the "Social Democrats" uniting all the pacific forces of labor against military force. He saw the chiefs of the German Socialist party braving imprisonment to affirm their fidelity to its

principles; Liebknecht and Rosa Luxembourg, on the other side of the frontier, extending their fraternal hands to Jean Jaurès. Also, the German people rising in revolt and the Hohenzollern dynasty falling in the terrible onset of revolution, like the Bourbons in France in 1792.

These dreams, rambling in nothingness, did not hold the attention of the workmen any more. They were not certain that the German comrades had said their last word; they expected something more from them: a manifestation, a decisive step. . . . Perhaps they were not all "Judases and unclean toad-eaters. . . ." Perhaps also they were not free to talk and act! But, already, the French no longer counted on their fraternal support, for before being proletarian, before being Socialists, these people were Germans and gloried in being so. . . .

"And we're, first of all, French."

That was all simple. Each one resumed his place in order.

There was no more discussion or disagreement possible. The Germans, here; the French, there.

And then, they demanded why the government allowed William leisure to prepare his army. . . . State of war, call of reservists, requisitions, fortifying of places, routes to the frontier barred, that was mobilisation, that thing with the difficult name—*Kriegeszustand*—that the evening journals announced. . . .

"No," said the old man, "that is not exactly mobilisation. . . ."

The others protested. They were not blind nor idiotic. . . . In the government's place, they would have mobilised that very day. . . .

"Patience!" repeated the old workman. . . . "Patience! . . . It will be to-morrow or day after to-morrow, the great departure. . . . You are in a great hurry! . . . War is not yet declared. . . ."

"What must happen to make you believe it? The Uhlans at Lunéville?"

"A Zeppelin over Paris?"

The group in blouses and workingmen's coats, the color of blue sandstone and cement, divided on the corner of the *Place*. Then the little girls

became mistresses of the street, and they installed themselves in the middle of the roadway, those who turned the rope and those who jumped, intent and breathless. All three sang the lines which accompany, according to rite, the swinging and retarding of the rope. There was a singular sadness in the contrast between the shrill voices and the solemn and drawling song:

Ah! la salade!
Quand elle poussera,
On la cueillera
On la mangera!

In one of the small houses a window opened. An old woman in a cap leaned out:

"Be quiet, children! This is no time to sing . . . and you, Lucie, come up! The soup is ready."

Lucie dropped the red wooden handle of the rope she was holding and began to run, clapping her hands for the sole joy of exercising her slim body and making a noise.

She cried:

"Yes, Grandmother! . . . Yes, Grandmother!"

The two other children, vexed, watched their companion as she ran . . . Regretfully, they rolled the rope as they walked, very well behaved, very much alike in spite of their unequal height, with their braids which hung on their narrow shoulders, their school-girl aprons and their legs in black stockings. A porter passed them. Madame Moriceau, returning from church, smiled at them. A flower-seller, carrying a basket containing full-blown fading roses, went the length of the street, seeking a last customer. Then a bell rang. The birds called to each other in the thick dark branches. And the little street passed into twilight.

Now, the fires were lighted in the houses for family dinner, as they had been lighted in the morning, for the first meal. The people returned, in an opposite direction, by the same route which they had taken with different thoughts, and one by one, Madame Miton saw the Abbé Moriceau,

and Monsieur Lepoultre and Alexandre Fréchette and his friend come back. The shops closed one after another. The men had finished their usual work; the women had completed their household and maternal tasks; the children had played; and this Friday which ended in a gloomy twilight had been for the little street and its inhabitants a day almost like other days in appearance. Prologue to a great drama, it still left to separate lives, a rhythm that was scarcely changed. Each of these interminable hours had increased the anxious emotions in all spirits, the emotion which Simone Davesnes had seen in the solemn silence and the stupor of the afternoon and which was expressed afterwards in discreet words and tears. But it was only emotion, passive and sorrowful, because it was still mixed with uncertainty, and which, in the face of the accomplished fact, would change its nature and pass into action.

As on other evenings, Simone waited for François in the grey wood salon where the presence that she loved was always before her eyes. If the room, like delicate porcelain, spoke entirely of

Simone, the salon, transformed into a working den, represented François. Feminine care was revealed in it in certain details; a bouquet in a grey-blue vase, a square of damask on a round table, a large shade of tea-rose silk veiled with lace and the little round arm-chair, with its tapestry of ribbons and embroidered flowers, near a work-box of mahogany. But the feminine element was secondary. It all revealed, primarily, the character, the thoughts and the work of the man.

Two open bookcases flanked the mantelpiece which had for its sole ornaments a beautiful cast of Colleone and old Dutch candelabra. A massive pier-table between the windows held piles of magazines, some books and some ancient weapons. A writing table loaded with papers and pamphlets, occupied the centre of the room. Near the little electric lamp shaded with green silk, there was a small reproduction of the Pompeian *Victory*. François loved this statuette, upright on the globe which it touched with one foot, and slender, with its robe spread out like a green

bronze sail. Divine butterfly of the Greek world, Psyche of battles! It reminded him of the lovely aeroplanes which would perhaps depart with her some day, in the invisible wake of her flight.

On the wall there were no affected little pictures; but engravings of the 18th century, two beautiful photographs representing *The Marseillaise on the Barricades*, by Delacroix and *Saint Genevieve Watching Over Paris*, by Puvis de Chavannes. Finally, in the place of honor, were portraits of the great-grandparents of Davesnes, conscientious but mediocre pastels which must have been very good likenesses. Major Davesnes, a retired officer, still young, wearing in the buttonhole of his frock coat the rosette of the Legion of Honor, had all the features of François, but more of roughness and melancholy. Theresine Davesnes, his wife, twenty-eight years old, was blonde, quite pretty, wearing a white dress, a red fichu and a cap with barbes of Alençon lace. These two honest faces, which the artist had made slightly formal and dignified, gave to the Parisian apartment, an old-time fragrance of the country.

Underneath, yellowing photographs and miniatures framed in black wood formed a little museum of souvenirs where the parents of Simone and of François fraternised. And on the pier-table, and the round table, were other inscribed likenesses, comrades of François, and Simone's father—Captain Bouvet—in his Colonial uniform. François Davesnes's study would have seemed modest and almost poor, compared to the Raynauds' luxurious quarters, but its simplicity was not without elegance and nothing seemed artificial. Everything was solid and real, and was all in accordance with the real taste of those who lived there and not in a style dictated by fashion. Everything was pleasing through a sort of intrepid honesty which made no pretence of dazzling any one and which was like François in his ideas and acts, making a material frame for his daily life. This eager and serious man, an extreme realist in the best sense of the word, had never been duped by glittering show and he was irritated by all that seemed bluff, pretension, dissimulation and falsehood. François Davesnes

never gave big names to little things. No man cared more than he for the esteem of his friends, no one less for the admiration of the world in general. The guiding rules of his life were simple: to be himself, to know what he ought to do, to will with an untiring energy and to enrich the humblest work with a desire for perfection which gives it beauty. This was the man in his social and moral life, in his sentiments and affections. This is what he was in his love. The woman whom he had chosen could see into the depths of his eyes as into the depths of his thoughts; all was clear and pure there. She could lean on an arm that never tired, and sleep in peace on a heart faithful to its last throb.

Simone relived the evenings she had passed in this same room, under the lamp, when she never wearied of questioning François about every kind of thing, and listening with the naïve attention of a woman in love who longs to absorb the soul of her lover and not to think of anything that does not concern him. Truly he had been her teacher

and inspirer. He had enlarged her intellectual horizon and stimulated in her the noble curiosity which so many gracious feminine spirits lack; he had shared his thoughts and his projects with her; he had saved her from the routine and the apathy which sometimes blight the happiness of marriage.

She said to herself:

"Since I owe everything to him, since I am his work, and as God himself desired it, the bone of his bone, and the flesh of his flesh, he must recognize his most profound thoughts in me, his living conscience; his soul must feel before mine as before a mirror; my courage must equal his and he must feel that I am one with him, as I have never been, even in the moment which separates us."

She said this to herself, in order not to be unexpectedly overwhelmed by her weakness; and, alone in the salon where the night was gathering about her, she forced herself to imagine, to accept the terrible anguish. But she wrung her hands as they lay upon her knee, and at times a dull cry rose to her lips.

XIII

THE clock struck half-past eight. The windows were no more than bluish rectangles in the misty darkness where the furniture was dimly outlined. Simone, exhausted, stretched herself out on a sofa covered with yellow velvet, which occupied the largest panel of the salon. Lost among the cushions, she cried a long time, and ended by falling asleep, her cheek on her little wet handkerchief.

An indefinable sensation slowly mingled with the torpor of sleep. Something very sweet, which Simone did not experience by material contact, passed over her, lighter than the gentlest kiss, more distant than an impalpable caress, something as vague as a thought of love become perceptible to the senses. The young woman turned her head; her lips parted, and, through her opening eyelids she saw, she divined rather, that François was sitting close to her.

She whispered:

"Oh! you were here! . . . You have been here a long time! . . . I think that I have been asleep. . . . It is not my fault. . . . I was tired. . . . It was so sad, so sad to wait for you. . . . Why didn't you waken me at once? . . ."

"I was watching you, dearest."

"I felt your eyes plainly."

She raised herself and threw her arms around his neck:

"You are here! . . . You are here! . . ."

She repeated these words, as if to persuade herself that she was not asleep, that she was not dreaming, that her arms were around the one she loved, clinging to him and kissing him with all her might:

"You were here!"

"My Simone! You can touch me and cling to me! . . . I am here, living and loving. . . . But what is the matter?"

With a smile which she forced to seem gay, she said, as she sometimes did, in their loving dialogues, jokingly:

"The matter is that I have you."

He put his arms around her and kissed her. Then, she feared that she was about to cry again, but she controlled herself.

"I came in without noise a short time ago. You were resting, stretched out, and I could hardly see you because of the cushions. What a little, little thing you were! I touched your cheek; I found your handkerchief, still wet, and I understood that you had not been a very reasonable woman. . . . But there was no way that I could be angry, was there? . . . Well, I sat down by your side. I watched for you to waken while I gazed at you, thinking about ourselves, about our love, of the happiness you have given me. . . . You slept. You did not see me. . . . It was sweet."

Their lips met. Simone thought:

"He, too, he is agitated. He too has had his moment of weakness, when I couldn't see him. . . ."

She realised suddenly that it was after nine o'clock.

"You poor dear, you must be dying with hunger, and I have such a light dinner to offer you! Marie left me to be with her Anthime. . . . We must serve ourselves. To the war in war fashion! . . ."

"It is surely the time to say so."

She rose, dizzy from poor sleep. Her white waist was rumpled. With an uncertain movement, she fastened the shell pins in the silken disorder of her hair.

François preceded her and lighted the hanging lamp in the dining-room. The orange silk of the centre globe, suspended by a chain, coloured the light underneath. On the table the cold repast was ready. The couple sat opposite facing one another, and Simone began to rehearse her visit to the Raynauds and her return by the Boulevards with Bertrand de Gardave.

"It is curious!" said François, "the news which has excited Paris, in the way you have told me, has left us quite calm. However, we understand its seriousness; but each one thinks of his task and works furiously over it. . . . The atmosphere of

the factory was already like barracks or an arsenal, and even the relation between engineers and workers had changed its character. There was more tacit cordiality and more discipline. This difference, noticeable yesterday, was marked to-day. . . . But what is the matter, Simone; you are not eating anything?"

He ate, without apology, for he had the temperament of men who keep, in difficult hours, the equilibrium of all their functions and faculties. He was one of those men who are able, at will, to go without sleep or nourishment and continue their work, but who dine with appetite in bombarded houses, and sleep peacefully, wrapped in their coats or on the bare earth, while the bullets whistle around them.

"How ill you look, Simone! . . . Are you suffering? . . . Ah! little heart, too tender, little head, terrified by a word! How much reason I have to be angry with you, to-day! Come, Simone, cheer up! Don't think of calamities that are the secret of the future. The present hour is ours; it is solemn and beautiful. Let us live it

fully. I have worked hard and my work, in its modest way, has been of service to the country. I have seen brave men, ready to do their duty. I have not heard a discordant word. I believe that all of our people are courageous and ready on the eve of war. . . . And here I am again for a night at home, with you. Why should I be sad? I am not. I feel a strange sort of happiness, without joy, and without gaiety, but profound, intense, like an extension of life. . . ."

Simone responded:

"It is a man's feeling, François. I do not experience it. It is with difficulty that I am able to understand it. This word: War! has not the same meaning in our minds and you do not want me to tremble when I hear it. The essential thing is that you do not tremble."

"You need not be afraid about that. I am reliable as far as that goes," he said, smiling.

She was hurt because he smiled. And why? When she forced herself to comprehend his feeling of happiness which he admitted, boldly, did

he not understand her grief and her impotence as a woman?

But she recalled suddenly that he had passed a long moment watching her, sleeping, and that he had waited, all alone, in the twilight . . . and she was consoled.

He left the dining-room, because an unexpected visitor rang the bell. It was Maxime Raynaud.

He excused himself for arriving in this way.

"I am bringing pieces of news, one of which will surprise you, at least," he said, as he entered the salon where Simone was lighting the lamps. "First, Nicolette received, about seven o'clock, a despatch from Jean, sent on his journey. My brother will be in Paris to-morrow. Nicolette asks you both to dine with her *en famille*. She has invited the Gardaves too. It will perhaps be our last reunion, in 1914."

François accepted:

"I should be free to-morrow afternoon, since we have an 'English week,' with a holiday on Saturday, but doubtless I shall be obliged to re-

turn to the factory during the day. In any case, count on us for dinner. I shall be delighted to see your parents again and to take the hand of my old friend. Now, sit down and tell us the rest."

Maxime wiped his forehead, moist with perspiration.

"My friend, a frightful thing has just happened. . . . Jaurès has been assassinated."

"Jaurès?"

"Scarcely an hour ago."

"Are you sure that it is not a false rumor? Day before yesterday it was announced in Paris that Caillaux was assassinated! . . ."

The scepticism of François irritated Maxime.

"I tell you that Jaurès has been assassinated, this evening, in a café of the Rue du Croissant. . . . I heard it from people who came to the Boulevard Montmartre. They gave the details: Jaurès was sitting in the café, with his back to the window, which some one had left open because of the heat. He had around him his friends, editors of *l'Humanité*. The murderer ap-

proached the window and he was able to push aside a little blind and to fire, point-blank, two shots of his revolver. Jaurès received two bullets in the neck. Ten minutes later he was dead. . . . This is what the conversations of passers-by have told me, brutally. I wanted to run to the bureau of *l'Humanité* to get precise information, but I preferred to come here first because I had promised Nicolette. It is already very late. After ten o'clock. You will excuse me?"

"I thank you for coming, Maxime, and I share your emotion. I know how you loved Jaurès. . . . But what was the cause of this stupid and atrocious crime? . . . What do you think? . . . What do you suspect? . . . Has the assassin been arrested? . . ."

"They have locked him up. The crowd threw itself upon him. . . . I do not know any more. . . . I am cruelly affected by this death, my dear François, and my mind is filled with grief. . . . Whether the criminal is a political enemy or a madman makes little difference at this moment! To-morrow the inquest will inform us. This

evening my thoughts are filled with him who formerly honored me with his friendship, whose noble heart no longer beats, whose great voice is gone. Even his adversaries, who esteemed him as they opposed him, weep with us. What sorrow for his friends! What a loss for France! He hated war; he had done everything to divert or retard it, even at price of severe personal loss and abominable calumnies. People did not always understand his intentions. He himself was sometimes mistaken through excess of generosity. But at this moment I know he accepted, as we do, the terrible necessity of defence by arms. This pacific man would have been to-morrow a marvellous influence, the living clarion of the nation. He is dead. Who will replace him?"

Maxime Raynaud had spoken these words with such vehemence that his emotion affected Simone and François. All three remained speechless an instant, filled with horror, as if they had seen before them the great tribune all bleeding, the first victim fallen on the threshold of the war.

But while the woman was moved to pity over

a noble life cut short, and Maxime pictured the robust and heavy man, with strong hands, with such young blue eyes set in a heavy face, François no longer saw the powerful individuality of the dead man. Jaurès, the assassination of Jaurès, the personality of the murderer, the motives, the circumstances, the effect of the crime—he considered them simply as a preliminary episode to the drama which had for actors not only men, nor even great men, but nations.

He asked, as if speaking to himself:

"The causes? It is impossible to determine them. . . . What political enemy had Jaurès, unless he were mad, who would have dared to commit this act, useless to his party, odious to all the world and calculated to serve the German interests by provoking more strife among the French? . . . The more I reflect, the more I am persuaded that it is the act of an isolated madman, or perhaps . . . Find out who could profit by the crime! . . . But we lack the necessary facts to judge. We must wait for the inquest."

"Certainly," said Maxime. "We have lived

for several days in a state of nervous tension that the mentally unbalanced could not endure without accident.

Simone feared the passions of the mob, riots, or some kind of revolution. François protested that he had confidence in the underlying good sense of the people.

"See!" he said. "Wasn't Paris seething day before yesterday? The people were rioting on the Boulevard. The Royalists and the Syndicalists insulted each other like the warriors of Homer before coming to blows. In forty-eight hours quiet has come. Who thinks about the Caillaux affair? The French, instead of being hypnotised by the Palais de Justice and the Palais-Bourbon, turn their eyes towards the east. There are no more Royalists or Syndicalists; there are only French soldiers. Instead of abusing each other, the parties will become reconciled over the coffin of Jaurès."

"It will be the last service he will render to the country," said Maxime.

"And the greatest."

"He would have done much more. He could have spoken to the heart of France and the nation would have followed him wholly."

"France should not follow any one. She will go where it is her duty to go and with no other leader but the Commander-in-Chief. The politicians have gabbled enough. When our diplomats have had their final conversation the cannon will be the orator, the fine '75; a friend of mine whose acquaintance I shall be charmed to renew."

The Doctor tried to prove that the politicians were a torment, but that one could not get along without them. He recalled the Convention and the representatives of the people in the armies. In his heart, he had remnants of prejudices which made him fear the predominance of the military men, as the military men dreaded the predominance of lawyers and professors. And that made François smile.

"My friend," he said, "we sha'n't quarrel as we did during the elections in May when I argued against you for the three years' law. My

military profession makes it necessary for me to keep aloof from politics, but I have my own opinions as well as you. . . . You have thought sometimes that I was a reactionary, while certain of my comrades have reproached me because I had 'advanced' ideas. The truth is that I am equally indifferent to the church and to Socialism, as impartial as possible, a friend of law and order, tolerant by nature and if one may associate the words: passionately moderate. But first of all I am French, and in front of the enemy every man of my race who goes to fight with me is my brother, and I do not ask how he has voted, whether he received the sacrament at Easter, whether he is affiliated with a red syndicate or if he aspires to restore the monarchy. Let us unite to stop the Germans on our frontiers and re-establish peace in Europe. Let us keep them from burning our ancestral home, and later, the fire extinguished, we can talk about the way of regulating it all. . . . It would be easy, perhaps, this evening, to find disagreeable truths to tell about such and such friends of yours, to prove

the insufficiency of our military preparations and to accuse the men responsible for it. It is neither my rôle nor my desire. Events will prove whether certain criticisms were well founded, and I hope that the lessons of experience will be immediately useful. But first, let us unite in a general right desire to do, each one, without vain words, his particular task. To-morrow, you will wear the uniform of Assistant-Surgeon and I shall become Lieutenant Davesnes again. Around us will be the cultivated and ignorant, infidels and bigots, scholars, artists and even members of parliament. In fighting side by side, we shall learn to know each other, which will help us to understand each other, and this will not be the smallest benefit of the war which the arming of the nation is preparing for the future, a united nation."

"I agree with you," said Maxime, "and Simone will bear witness that I expressed to-day, to my sister-in-law, a feeling similar to yours. And young Gardave himself, if he had been there, would not have contradicted anything, wholly Catholic and Royalist as he is. . . . We feel al-

ready throughout the country the fraternity of the race. This is what will surprise and deceive the Germans."

"They have made an error in psychology and it will not be the last. They are all ready to find bad conditions in Paris; in French literature, improper books; in the French woman, the little *cocotte* of the comic papers; in the French family, the only son, corrupt from early debauches, alcoholic and tuberculous; in the French army, the anti-militarists."

"And yet," said Maxime, "in spite of our grudges, we have loyally tried to understand Germany. We have welcomed Wagner in our theatres in spite of the *claque*, and inferior Munich painters have taken a place in our salons disproportionate to their merit. Also German methods at the Sorbonne. . . . We have been poisoned by Teutonism, as a compensation for that which you call 'our effort loyally to understand Germany.' It seems as if the humiliations we have undergone had forced a commonplace, inelegant feeling, reserved for simpletons who

joke on the old themes of beer and sourkrout! . . . But intellectual France, weary of hatred, went to the school of the conquerors. What good did it do them? . . . Our admiration appeared to them a sign of our weakness which recognised their superiority. In the main, we have nothing but avowed or secret detractors in all Germany, while Germany has with us some detractors, no friends, but many admirers.

"The Germans do not make fine distinctions. They are not able to understand us, even those who want to love us. There are only a few, but there are some. I have met them. Their praise rings false and also their assurances of affection, and their finest sentiments end in clumsiness. I remember an excellent man, with whom I spent several months in Bavaria while I was studying German. Because of friendship for me, he tried to find something to praise in my degenerate country, and he always came around to our wines, our comediennes and our dressmakers. I cited, in vain, certain phrases of Goethe, who admired and loved the France of the Revolution. Such de-

pravity in a great genius upset him. He did not dwell on this subject but began talking of the Moulin-Rouge. Poor Monsieur Hermann! I cannot despise his memory, for he was not bad. He had some traits of the 'old Germany' that has disappeared. Peace to his ashes! Since his death, at various intervals, I have seen his three sons. The oldest is an engineer in Frankfort, the second in business in Berlin and the youngest, professor at Bonn. They are modern Germans. They dream only of material power, riches and domination. They despise everything that is not German. I felt in them this strange mysticism, this worship of force, almost lyric in its expression, which has become a mental disease, the megalomania which has seized all the race."

François had risen. He walked the length of the room to quiet his excitement, and suddenly he exclaimed joyously:

"They are more numerous than we and more formidable, but perhaps less formidable than they think. Their pride contains the germ of their deception. There is a flaw in their steel. They

do not know with what vigor we shall all arise against them. Ah! Maxime, what a noble and beautiful war this will be! Hurrah for the days that are coming, hurrah for the fight, the test and victory; putting one's foot on a fallen enemy, what is death in the face of such an opportunity? Our children will envy us!"

He stopped in the luminous circle made by the lamp and Simone noticed his extraordinary resemblance to the portrait of his great-grandfather. The highest emotion that could move a man in all the fibres of his being, made the essential characteristics of his race apparent in his expression, and brought to his spirit the hereditary instinct of his fighting ancestors. He did not look at his wife; he spoke spontaneously to his friend, because he was a citizen and a soldier, like himself, and for both of them the words had the same meaning. But Simone was won by the enthusiasm that François—usually so reticent and sparing in his words and gestures—irradiated from his whole person, as a hearth irradiates light and heat. And she thought of the other Davesnes, soldier of the

Republic and of the Empire, who, in a frame of dull gold, contemplated his great-grandson. She saw him as he had been revealed in naïve memoirs, kept in the family. He had not received the scientific education which had formed the mind of François; he had been a man of his time, a "patriotic and sensible soldier," brought up on Plutarch and Rousseau. Son of a farmer of Senlis, instructed more or less by a curé, his godfather, he had secretly read *Le Contrat social* and *Héloïse*. Burning with a great desire to liberate the people and overthrow tyrants, he was enrolled in 1792 at the call of an imperilled country. No doubt, on the eve of his departure for Argonne, where he was to rejoin the army of Dumouriez, the little sixteen-year-old soldier must have lived through hours analogous to those in which his descendant was living and his proud young face must have glowed with the same flame that burned in the eyes of François. Then, as to-day, after an interval of more than a century, the people of Paris thought that they heard the Germanic hordes marching in the Rhine valley; then,

as to-day, there was among the people a Davesnes ready to give his blood to France and for the ideal she represents in the universe.

The black eyes of the portrait seemed to watch every movement of Simone and to read in her mind the thoughts still sad and troubled which she had known how to hide from François. Forgotten by the two men who were imagining coming battles, the woman felt a mysterious encouragement in that gaze from out of the past. The look said: "Our wives do not cry when they fasten the tri-colored cockade to our hats. The tears of a beloved one are heavier and tire us more than the knapsack and gun. Victory loves those who follow her with a light step. Be brave! Do not cry."

And Simone, pressing her heart with both hands, heard in the shadow.

XIV

THE first day of August dawns, scorching and cloudy, on a Europe in arms.

And it is morning again in the little street, a morning which already was not like any in the past. The same light, the same bird-notes, the same familiar sounds, the saw in the stone-cutter's yard, passing carts, the cries of the vegetable sellers and the flic-flac of water on the pavements. . . . Meanwhile, in the midst of these noises is perceptible, at intervals, a strange silence. . . . No one speaks; no one smiles. Housewives are absorbed in restless waiting; the masons do not comment out loud on the appeal of Viviani to the Parisian people, which has just been posted. . . .

Citizens, an abominable crime has just been committed. . . .

The president of the Council announces the assassination of Jaurès. He honors him who, in

trying days, "upheld with his authority the action of the government, in the interest of peace." He asks for the patriotism of the working classes and that all the population should "maintain quiet and not bring disorder into the capital by inopportune agitation."

The passers-by read without saying a word. Some smile sardonically and emphasize this phrase: *"The assassin is arrested. He will be punished."* Has the recent trial shaken their confidence in the just severity of the courts? . . . But the exhortation to be quiet seems useless. . . . Who thinks of fomenting any disturbance in Paris, on this day when the first reservists called are leaving their families?

They know of some, in the district, who have received their summons and directions and even in the little street itself, there are Gustave Miton, and Auguste, the boy at the Gouge grocery. The first went entirely alone, swaggering, having refused the company of his mother and his fiancée. The other, without any family in Paris, received a bag of linen and provisions from Ma-

dame Gouge. He wanted to kiss all the women present when he left and promise them "William's moustache."

Madame Anselme's shop is open. Meanwhile an accommodating neighbor has taken the place of the beautiful stationer at the counter. She confides to Marie Pourat that the proprietress is very ill. . . . Last evening when Monsieur Pierre told her about the assassination of Jaurès she had had a kind of dizziness in her head, and now she is in bed. Monsieur Pierre could not take care of her on account of his examination. The neighbors offered to help.

"Of course we must help, in times like these! Poor dear woman! It is apoplexy."

"Give her a mustard poultice," advises Marie Pourat.

"Monsieur Pierre went to the doctor's house."

"The main thing is for her not to know the news, poor dear woman!"

The news! Brought by the papers, it goes from mouth to mouth. It causes words between Monsieur Lepoultre and Monsieur Delmotte, one

holding the murderer of Jaurès to be mad, the other for an agent of Germany. It makes sweet Madame Moriceau and Alexandre Fréchette's young friend cry. It upsets Simone Davesnes, dressing in her blue room. . . .

For it is known now that Germany ever since the 25th of July has been arming her Western fortresses and concentrating her troops on our frontiers. It is known that French locomotives are being kept in Lorraine; that communications are interrupted; that Austria-Hungary has decreed general mobilisation, and that Belgium, fearing for her safety, calls all of her reserves to arms. It is also known that an ultimatum has come addressed by Germany to Russia and France. . . .

This does not prevent the diplomats from parleying, and Herr von Schoen[1] pronounces the conversations reassuring. He declares that the public is wrong in being alarmed, "because of simple preventive measures which will not cause any aggravation of the international situation."

[1] von Schoen was the German ambassador at Paris.

One knows all that and one waits. . . .

Simone Davesnes, when she went out at about eleven o'clock found no traces of the gaiety still persisting in the city the preceding morning. The clouds, still low and greyish white, dimmed the light and spread over Paris a still breeze, like a breath from a furnace. The young woman took the subway and transferred at its terminus to a tramway for the suburbs. She wanted to meet François at the factory entrance and lunch with him in a little restaurant. Perhaps they would return together, for, according to the English custom, François was always free Saturday afternoon. But this week-end was full of the unknown and all habits might be changed.

In the train all the people were reading the papers. They chatter with their neighbors, courteously, on the same subjects and felt a secret pleasure in noticing the unanimity of feeling and opinion, a pleasure quite new for a people devoted to argument and contradiction. The fact that they were among French people created ties

and strengthened their confidence. They said, "We . . . with us. . . ." as if they had never spoken these words with their full meaning. And already the desire to be polite was touchingly evident in men and women of the humblest class, who usually did not voluntarily offer their seats and liked to elbow well-dressed people whom they considered rich.

At the barrier Simone found the tramway. It ran between the crowded houses of the suburban district, then on the roadways black with coal-dust and planted with sickly trees. The landscape stretched out, disfigured and soiled by industries, and yet acquiring from them a kind of sombre grandeur, a gloomy, powerful vitality. A canal sparkled, reflecting red and black boats. Zinc roofs shone dully above the brick wall. Immense chimneys belched volumes of soot-colored smoke against the low-hanging clouds. On the yellowish façades of the working-men's tenements could be seen geraniums on window-sills, under a decoration of washing, and the interiors with wardrobes with glass doors, mattresses on

the floor and women in loose jackets, busy with the Saturday house-cleaning.

As the tram passed over the railroad bridge, a station building guarded by Zouaves could be seen far below. The men lifted their hats to salute the soldiers, and in the Turkish caps and the baggy trousers and the bayonets glittering at the ends of their guns, Simone had the first concrete vision of the great thing she had imagined in an ensemble of large and confused pictures and emotions.

The tramway penetrated into a region of factories, stores, warehouses and working-men's homes. Young men passed, going in an opposite direction, near the station. Each one carried a bag, a knapsack, or a package tied in a handkerchief; some were carrying big shoes over their shoulders, peasant fashion. Almost always two women accompanied them, an old and a young one; the mother, with the wife or a fiancée. Sometimes the young woman led a child by the hand. Some were evidently expectant mothers, and blighting grief had aged their wan faces.

But none of these women cried. Their resigned sorrow made them humble in comparison with the calm pride of the man.

Before the principal entrance of the factory Simone left the tramway.

XV

THE clouds, pale and leaden, spread their filmy ragged edges. The sun penetrated them in spots and was reflected by the windows and the zinc roofs of the factory where its brilliant rays touched them.

The grilled gateway was large and opened on a court. At the back were the smoky brick buildings; the workshops, running the entire length, and the offices indicated by black signs. The grass, blackened by coal dust, formed green trails on the trampled earth and the pavements. Some poplars extended above a roof. Near the main office several military automobiles waited, panting. The hurried throb of their motors seemed to urge on the hidden life of the machinery operating behind the walls. The throbbings said: "Quicker! Quicker!" as if the pliant vehicles that skim the earth would like to allure away above them, in the same flight, the beautiful aero-

planes about to be born. Quicker! Quicker! let the forges blaze, the electricity pass on the network of wires, the machines fashion the metal, wood and cloth, so that the birds of war may finally leave their nests! Faster! Faster!

No other sounds were heard in the vast court, nothing but this impatient palpitation!

Before the pay offices were many laborers in working clothes. They were reservists whom the order of departure had not reached at their homes in the morning. Their wives were come in haste to bring the papers left by the police. They dropped their work immediately; they had gathered in a little package the small personal possessions that they always kept in a corner of the shop, and had gone, for the last time, to draw their wages.

Outside of the gates their wives watched for their coming and other women arrived holding the summons in their trembling fingers and dragging along the children who clung to their skirts. They talked to the concierges, then stood to one side, docilely. Some of them bit their lips or

blinked their eyes to keep back the starting tears and that gave them a haggard expression. As soon as a man had passed the door, a woman separated herself from the group and went to him. They faced each other without a word, linked arms, and walked away. . . .

Simone Davesnes watched for the silhouette of François in the court. She saw him with two engineers. They passed through the gate and stood in the midst of the crowd. The workmen already outside saluted them.

As Simone approached him, she heard François say:

"It is a sign of the times! Yesterday, our excellent Syndicalists would not have saluted us outside of the factory."

He finally discovered Simone and introduced his friends to her; Leclercq, Lieutenant of Artillery, and Rochebelle, a naval officer. Madame Davesnes knew Leclercq, having met him once at a little station restaurant where she had sometimes lunched with her husband.

Though the presence of the engineers would

have been agreeable under other circumstances, it was now distressing to Simone, for she had hoped to be alone with François. In spite of the notice, she sat beside him, on the leather bench of the restaurant, opposite Rochebelle.

Leclercq, a thin and refined young man with fiery black eyes, was radiant. He had just received his summons and although he was married and a father, he did not think of his family. . . . He said:

"We shall march, go into action, destroy and create! What an opportunity! . . . We are privileged to live at this time!"

The marine chimed in chorus:

"Yes, it is a good thing! We might have been too young or too old, whereas we are just the right age, strong, stout-hearted and in good shape. And what a fine spirit our workers have! I should not have believed it. . . . I distrusted them. . . . They are brave, that sort."

"You saw," said François, "how they saluted you?"

All three took pleasure in praising this sugges-

tion of discipline among the men they would shortly command and they enjoyed talking of artillery stores and aviation in technical language that Simone did not understand in the least. It did not occur to them to excuse themselves to the young woman absorbed in the same interest for speaking seriously and in a manly way instead of trying to divert her with agreeable talk.

Occasionally, Rochebelle turned to her to explain a word that she had not understood. He was young, blond, with gentle eyes. Simone asked him:

"Are you going to embark, Monsieur?"

He didn't know at all. He would go where his superiors sent him after having joined his ship in the appointed harbor.

They began to compare naval warfare with war on land and François asserted that a field battery in action was a marvellous thing.

"And don't you think that a submarine may prove to be a marvellous thing?" said Rochebelle.

"Yes, that would be interesting to navigate. But I should prefer a good aeroplane. Ah! I re-

gret not having my pilot's license! It is true that one could always be an observer."

"I," said Leclercq, "like cannon. I am in the artillery because of a real vocation."

They spoke of engines of war with a proud interest and a kind of affection. And they also mentioned their pleasure at being able to follow their profession at last and play the part they had prepared for since their youth. The aeroplanes already constructed would not be used for imitation war during the autumn manœuvres; they would soon fly over real battle-fields, pursued by real shrapnel, and with death, glorious death, sitting by the side of the pilot and the wind of victory in their wings.

"And what would you say, gentlemen," asked Simone, "if the Ministry kept you at the factory?"

Rochebelle declared that he would be heartbroken, and that he would do everything in the world to play a more active rôle than that of an engineer in a factory. There were enough mature

men fitted for such work, but the young dreamed of other things.

"When they spoke to you of remaining, Davesnes, it didn't seem to please you. Then, you are going to Besançon?"

"Probably," replied François, who felt his wife quiver beside him.

"My regiment is in the East," said Leclercq. "I shall not have time to see my little family again. They are installed at the other end of France for the summer. . . . But it is perhaps better so. When a man goes where I am going, it is better not to look behind him. . . . Ah! Rochebelle, you are lucky to be free and alone!"

"Is one ever free and alone?" said the marine as his eyes grew sober.

Simone divined his thought and she said to him, sweetly:

"Those who remain behind must be pitied a little. In war, you see only action, glorious danger and also the exercise of your profession. I admire your fine courage, but I cannot speak of war, as you do, with serenity. The unheard of

suffering I foresee makes me wretched in advance, and I feel myself tortured with all the wounded and with all the women whose hearts will ache. . . . To sacrifice oneself! Ah! That would be easy and deserving of little praise. Each one of us would be glad to die for the country . . . but to sacrifice those whom we love! . . ."

Her voice faltered, choked by a nervous contraction in her throat. She did not dare to look at François.

"I pity the women," Rochebelle replied, "but Leclercq is right: when one is going where we must go, he must not turn to look back. Excessive emotion over dear ones and too vivid a realization of their sufferings weakens us, while we shall increase our strength tenfold if we are able to forget and consider ourselves, from now on, as dead."

"Oh!" she said, revolted. "You are hard-hearted!"

"But, Madame, I have not said that I was able to practise stoicism to this degree."

Leclercq said that the duty of women was simple.

"They must keep quiet, first of all! . . . I beg your pardon, Madame, for this brutal frankness. . . . No manifestations from the suffragettes! The part of women, in time of war, consists in governing the house, raising the children, and nursing the wounded. We shall attend to the rest."

"You are severe on us," said Simone. "It seems to me that if all the men go, the women must preserve the life of the country in many ways which we ourselves cannot foresee. Very modestly and with dignity, they will be, like you, at the service of France. . . . And don't be afraid! They will hide their tears."

She spoke without looking at François, but she was really addressing herself to him alone and waited for his warm approbation.

He only said:

"Trust the French women. They have known how to do their duty in the past and we have

not needed to give them lessons. This discussion is quite useless."

He was not willing, before strangers, to prolong a discussion which indirectly concerned Simone, and without transition, he returned to the war and politics. Then the young woman was silent. She felt wretched and unhappy among these men, separated even from the one she adored by feelings she could not communicate. Could it be true that in the moral order values were changed to such a degree that tenderness and compassion had become weakness, almost feminine faults, snares that the masculine will must avoid in order to keep itself intact?

Simone said to herself that patriotism is not the same thing for a woman that it is for a man. It has not the brutality of an instinct nor the austerity of an idea. It is a feeling that does not attach itself to abstraction and does not understand the bloody intoxication of battle. The woman's France is first the home, husband, child, then the Church, the peaceful country-side, family traditions and the graves of the dead. The

man's France is all that, but it is also the tilled field, workshop, factory, laboratory, library and regiment. The woman's France is made of love; that is what is defended. The France of man is love and action together: it is that which fights.

And as the night before, Simone had said to François, this word "War" did not create the same pictures in their minds. The men saw nothing but the insulter, the enemy. All their energy was strained by the attack and the repulse, and they were not unhappy, because they were certain that they were doing their duty. In war, women see the other side. For centuries, men have slaughtered for just and unjust causes, but the causes are their own, and the menace of death has never come from those who nurse the wounded and renew the race. While flags wave and trumpets resound, the women having given their own flesh and blood to their country, do not complain; but they all think of the soldiers abandoned in the trenches and agonising on hospital cots, of burning villages, of wandering orphans, and of all the mothers of all nations who have given

birth in anguish, endured fatigue, fed, nursed and brought up for twenty years the fine young men devoted to death.

Simone was reflecting in this way when, suddenly, she felt the hand of François seeking hers, under the table, and pressing it secretly, lovingly until it hurt her. Pent-up emotion filled his eyes with tears.

How she longed to be alone with François! How she wanted to lean against his shoulder, saying to him: "Love me! Love me! I suffer. You know it, and neither you nor I would say anything. . . . But silently, to help me to be strong, without fear of being weakened by me, love me, love me, my beloved." And here she was obliged to control herself for the sake of convention. The hours were passing, the last hours that love claimed sorrowfully and which everything—François's profession, François's friends—snatched from her.

Lunch ended and the men expressed the intention of taking Madame Davesnes to the tramway

before returning to the factory. Rochebelle and Leclercq discreetly went ahead.

Simone and François walked side by side. He said to her:

"I should not have let you come here. . . .

She reproached him for lack of frankness.

"They offered you a position at the factory and you have refused it. Why did you hide it from me?"

He defended himself vigorously. "At first, he had nothing to refuse, because no one had offered him anything. In speaking with his directors about possibilities still vague, he had, like every one else, expressed his desire to go to the front. What could be more natural? He was not an invalid nor a greybeard. He was not even one of those specialists whose services are more valuable behind the army than on the first lines. He had not asked for war, but if it broke out—he still spoke as if it were not inevitable—he intended to take his part fully."

"Do not hope that they will keep me here! I should be desperate. I should be ill. . . . If you

are capable of wishing such a thing you should not have married an officer. . . ."

She quieted him with a word.

"My husband, you belong to France before you do to me. I know it. That is why you must tell me all without reservation."

He whispered:

"I am a little nervous, Simone. Waiting for coming events over-excites every one. We are violent without reason. Forgive me. I adore you, dearest, and I feel all your suffering. Go home now and try to occupy yourself until evening. We shall meet at Nicolette's, and to-morrow, if events do not move too quickly, we shall have one more day together. . . ."

The tram stopped. François helped Simone into the car. She hardly had time to bow to Leclercq and Rochebelle.

XVI

THE long car was almost empty. An old man read in a low voice, making comments, the letters of condolence addressed to Madame Jaurès and published in the latest edition of the paper. Two women listened. The letter of the President of the Republic seemed to them very acceptable, but they were surprised that Maurice Barrès and Marcel Habert had written in a sympathetic way. They did not consider then that Jaurès was a disloyal Frenchman.

"Hadn't he opposed the three-years' law; what should we have done to-day?"

The old man explained that certain errors in judgment did not imply intellectual disloyalty and lack of patriotism. But the women did not make these distinctions. They were convinced that the Anarchists would stop the mobilisation if they were not put in prison, as quickly as possible, beginning with Gustave Hervé.

"But Hervé is not an Anarchist! He has become patriotic and he is preaching a crusade against Prussian militarism," said the old man.

And he flourished a number of the *Guerre Sociale* with a wide black border.

On the platform, a laboring man chatted with the conductor. He had deposited at his feet a canvas sack filled with bunches of garlic and he held under his left arm a fagot of laurel twigs with glossy, dark leaves.

"It looks as if we were going to have it!" he said.

"My goodness!" replied the conductor. "It certainly does."

"There are still persons who don't think so."

"People have talked so much about war and it hasn't come! . . . That's why they hold to that idea."

"As for me," said the man with the laurel, "I saw right away that the affair would end badly. Well, I have taken my precautions and I am not excited."

He drew a small record book out of his pocket and winked with one eye.

"Get out, you big rascal!" said the conductor. "He is scared and has taken his money out of the savings bank."

"Savings! You want to make fun of me? In my trade, we don't have any savings. I sell garlic and laurel. The profit is not large. No, what I asked for was my military book, not my savings book. The quartermaster had forgotten to write my order of mobilisation in it. Also, last Monday, I took it to the Town Hall to have it written up, and just now, they have returned it to me. . . . I go the second day."

He replaced his book in his pocket and arranging his odoriferous branches, remarked:

"I work with machine guns. They are splendid. It is worth while to work with anything like that."

The tram crossed the city limit. Simone rose. Before her, the honest man, burdened with his sack and fagot, left at the first stop. He had a farewell smile for the conductor:

"Good-bye, perhaps! We can easily see what is coming. While we are waiting, we must live! I am going to sell my garlic and laurel."

Simone admired the practical philosophy of the poor men, and the teaching they gave in their candor, to those who knew how to listen. How quickly they resigned themselves and how easily they adapted themselves to circumstances! The war would trample on their interests and affections. But they bent their backs under this burden, without losing time and seeking for the causes of the trouble. War, oh, yes! it is terrible! but, as Madame Miton said, in the midst of her tears, "We cannot become Prussians, and as we must endure the scourge, we must resign ourselves to it, as we would to illness, deaths in the family and everything that comes to us in life. So much the better for those who survive! The others, we pity and honor, but we think: 'It was their destiny.' "

Besides, if one must die, a bullet in the chest is less painful than a cancer and cleaner. But as long as we are alive, we must not worry our

heads finding reasons for everything and thinking gloomy thoughts. The wise man clings to his usual habits to the very last moment, carries on his little business, enjoys himself properly with his family or his sweetheart, and says, as he drinks his last glass, the "stirrup-cup":

"Here's one less for the Prussians."

It is a classic joke by no means new, but reality makes it more piquant and it always amuses a good Frenchman!

Simone felt herself as remote from this popular philosophy as she did from the cheerful courage of a Rochebelle, or a Leclercq. Her resignation was not a passive assent to inevitable misfortune, as with the plain people. It was the result of a painful effort of her will and reason. The young woman knew her duty and fulfilled it. A daughter of Racine and not of Corneille, she acknowledged herself incapable of heroism without special strength which she drew, humbly, from the example of the poor, from the memory of her ancestors, from the sweetness of her imperilled country, and even from her love, desiring

it to be worthy of François. She said to herself that Marie Pourat was more self-sacrificing than she, but she was tempted to ask herself:

"What is Anthime Pourat compared with François Davesnes?"

This thought made her ashamed. She suppressed it with all her might. Still, is it not true that equality of misfortune does not involve equality of suffering? Many widows console themselves by a second marriage; the hearts of others grow apathetic in dull forgetfulness; others satisfy their need of love with their children. Perpetual mourners are rare and the law of life intends that it shall be so. But the more sensitive and finely wrought the being, the more great shocks destroy in him the delicate cells and the fine tissues that are so slow in rebuilding. An oak, struck by lightning, becomes green again. A blooming rose-bush withers, if it is broken.

There was nothing abnormal in the little street when Simone reached it, or, rather, the first indication of the coming catastrophe had become,

in twenty-four hours, part of its normal aspect. One was no longer surprised to see a line of housewives before the Gouge grocery. The vegetable and fruit markets were offering string-beans, tomatoes and perishable food for almost nothing, and the fish-seller behind her stall, sadly contemplated the despised soles and lobsters spoiling in the thundery weather. People paused, loaded with provisions; one carrying two cans of petrol, another a can of wood-alcohol; one had dry vegetables in a yellow paper bag and another a box of prunes and packages of macaroni. This unnecessary laying in of provisions amused the Parisians as a fine trick, played beforehand, on the greedy merchants, and a few shops where prices had been raised at once were already hearing the rumbling of popular discontent.

Mademoiselle Florence was embroidering among the fuchsias in pots and the larkspurs that bloom in the beautiful month of August. But few customers interrupted her work and dreams. By contrast, Madame Anselme's shop was doing a good business. Special pamphlets

about the war had been added since morning to the women's fashion magazines and novels. *France Victorious in the Coming War. . . . The Partition of France* (Translated from the German), with its counterpart: *The Partition of Germany.* The kind neighbor was installed at the counter. She gave moving details of the handsome stationer's illness to the customers and the women lowered their voices in sympathy. More and more timid, the manager of the dairy kept the metal curtain half lowered in front of the building. The surly groups, among whom were some very young Apaches, were come to prowl on the sidewalk in the hope of pouring out a stream of poisoned milk. The agent was not sure whether the mysterious Maggi was German, Austrian, or Swiss, but she was very sure that his milk was good, no matter what it was, and that it came from peaceable French animals. In her indignant soul, she blamed the stupid crowd and recalled the scenes of the Revolution she had seen in moving pictures.

Why couldn't she imitate the little locksmith

and lampmaker, on the corner of the *Place* opposite the cleaners? This man, an Alsatian, had taken care to prevent possible ill-intentioned attacks, and had written on his door, in chalk:

A FRENCH SHOP

The proprietor is mobilised in the Tenth Artillery

LONG LIVE FRANCE!

At the sight of this inscription the rascals playing hopscotch were seized with great patriotic zeal and in the squares, drawn on the sidewalk, they replaced the words "Heaven" and "Hell" with "France" and "Germany."

Their play took on a warlike character, a strategical interest, to impress the little girls who did not jump rope any more. The oldest, the cleaner's daughter, was burdened with a large baby, swaddled in tight sausage-like clothes. The youngest watched the living plaything with longing eyes. From time to time, she murmured:

"Jeanne, let me hold your little brother."

Jeanne was looking at the game and did not listen or else she replied:

"You wouldn't know how. . . ."

The little one yielding at last to her desire, tickled the child's chin and excited it with shrill cries. Finally, she pulled her playmate's apron.

"Jeanne! Lend me your little brother! I'll give you a sou."

"Truly?"

"Yes! Here is the sou!"

"Well, take him, then."

The hoarse voices of men selling papers called unintelligible words, far away, on the avenue. The grinding of the saw rose from the woodcutter's yard. There was a smothered oath and a heavy concussion of stones being dumped on a cart, but the workmen no longer whistled and only spoke when it was necessary.

They have sent an apprentice to get the last edition of the paper. The boy returned running.

"Nothing new?"

"Just the same things. . . . There are details about the lunatic who killed Jaurès."

"Oh! the lunatic! We ought to know about it! . . ." said the old workman whose father had been through the Commune.

He was sad, because he had had faith in Jaurès's influence, in the good-will of the German comrades, in the reign of brotherhood and justice. All of his illusions were falling to pieces. He recalled public gatherings when the voice never to speak again had carried the audience over wide billows of soothing phrases, towards the shore of the future, towards the Promised Land, which was to include the entire world, pacific and at peace. And he thought of his twenty-year-old son, of his daughter, married three weeks ago, and his brave and worn-out wife. From the depths of his soul, he cursed Germany, and in spite of his approaching sixtieth birthday his hands trembled with longing to carry a gun too.

Work consumed their strength and somewhat obscured the one thought that weighed on their spirits. Stones fell into the wagon and the saw ground away. . . .

The white clouds turned to a leaden grey. The

enervated cats, howling at the coming storm, stretched out on the warm ground. In the thick verdure of the chestnut trees, the loving "coulou —coulou" of the doves, died away languidly.

The coolness of the white vestibule enfolded Simone Davesnes like a subtle perfume. In passing, she had a glimpse of the lodge full of women —neighbors come to console Madame Miton.

It was incredible—the women, seated or standing, were silent. Each had brought her own anxiety and had added it, piled up, to the cares of the others. Together, they remembered the universal grief. They no longer asked anxiously: "Will there be war? . . ." They inquired: "When? To-morrow or this evening, or at once?" The fact that Gustave Miton had gone, that one mother had begun her sacrifice, affected the others as a crude colored picture influences the illiterate. Spoken or printed words do not convey a sufficiently vivid impression of truth to naïve minds to cause conviction. These women knew, now, by a visible example, the fate of them all. Some of them had grumbled:

"What shall we do? . . . How can we live? . . . On what? . . ."

Questions without answers.

Madame Miton had vanished in the depths of an armchair. A little blonde, with a pretty bare neck, her arms crossed on a sewing-machine table, wept quietly. It was Gustave Miton's fiancée.

Marie Pourat opened the door for Simone. She had arrived later than usual in order to be free after six o'clock, since Monsieur and Madame were to dine in the city.

"Madame doesn't know anything new?" she inquired.

"No, Marie, nothing."

"I have drawn my money out of the bank. If my husband goes, I shall not need any help."

Marie Pourat was a capitalist! The fortune of France is made by millions of these ants who heap up the sous and silver and gold pieces like grains in savings banks and trust companies.

Proud in her own fashion, expecting nothing of any one, Marie foresaw hard times and, in giv-

ing her Anthime to the country, she found it quite natural to put her money where it would be safe. This thought made Simone almost smile as she tore open her letter in the salon. The Davesnes were perhaps poorer than their housemaid; they had lived from day to day, since their marriage, protected by the contract binding the engineer to his factory. For the first time, Simone realised that her material existence would be changed. Formerly, she had earned her living by making small figures of wax and fabric, with her deft fingers, but the trades dealing in artistic luxuries would be ended by the war. She shrugged her shoulders. . . . In truth, economic difficulties, even poverty, did not frighten her. The two letters, read at a glance, made her certain that she would know how to adapt herself to the unknown conditions of her future life. One came from Brittany and demanded immediate answer in regard to the Kermarie and Kerhostin Villas; the other reminded her of the hour arranged for a fitting, and both seemed absurd, laughable, many things: a villa, a beach costume, useless super-

fluities! Three days had made a profound separation between the times when these things counted, when it was possible to enjoy liberty, leisure, the beauty of the world, the sweetness of living and a sense of long life ahead, and the time when every life was unbalanced to the extent that one could not even conceive of the possibility of happiness and it seemed a privilege to possess a roof and bread.

Simone surveyed the salon, the furniture she had chosen, all that she had cared for with a feminine sense of possession. To her great astonishment, she felt herself quite detached from all these things, incapable of being moved by their possible loss. What had happened to her unconsciously? By what process of evolution had she arrived, without knowing it, at such a state of mind? She could imagine, without terror, the misery and uprooting, which would kill the weak and aged! She had therefore enough latent force to bear all these material sufferings and not die? . . . Would she ever have the strength to en-

dure the strain of solitude and perhaps the supreme trial of bereavement?

Her heart and flesh rebelled. No, no, not that! She could not endure that and live! She could not consent in advance to the loss of François and say: "Even this is right! . . ."

The mere threat of war had almost killed Madame Anselme, smitten in her maternity and too weak to readjust under the shock. In how many poor women's souls had the same blow brought already the same secret wound, a death stab, by which life would be ended? How many mothers and wives for whom the future was not arranged, in this hour of horrible uncertainty, were crying to Heaven: "No! No! . . . May it never come! . . ."

Again, Simone experienced a mental struggle. Again she trembled all over with the great shock of her grief. Again, she wrung her hands and wept blinding tears. Then she stopped shuddering and crying. Her eyes were closed and burning and she became oblivious to everything around her, a stranger to herself. . . .

Suddenly Marie Pourat came in without knocking:

"Madame!"

"What do you want?"

"Madame . . . there is something the matter . . . everybody is running. . . ."

Simone went to the open window. In the street the disturbance increased, spreading like a ripple over the face of the water. People ran hastily out of the houses, looking in every direction, questioning with voice and gesture. A man passed the stoneyard hurriedly; he cried a phrase that Simone and Marie did not understand.

Inside of the house a door banged, shaking the reverberating staircase around the mounting elevator. On the landing of the ground floor, a telephone rattled. Madame Miton did not respond to its call. She was outside, like all other neighbors, including the grocer boys, the proprietor himself, also Madame Anselme's substitute and Mademoiselle Florence. . . . Outside were Monsieur Lepoultre and Alexandre Fréchette, looking in his blue smock like the masons he questioned:

"Ho, down there, comrades! What has happened?"

The grinding of the saw was stopped. Outside of the fence, the masons mingled with the passers-by. Wild with curiosity, the gamins jostled the older people, while a group of anxious women breathed out disconnected words, broken sighs, and a plaintive question:

"What has happened? . . . What has happened? . . ."

A young workman explained:

"He called it out as he ran by. . . . It is posted at the Town Hall. . . ."

"You are sure?"

"I haven't seen anything, myself. It was the people going by."

Two men came out to the corner of the *Place* carrying their bill-posters' material and a package of white placards. They were surrounded, followed and almost hustled along.

Simone said to Marie Pourat:

"Shut the window."

She put on her hat and took her jacket and

gloves. She too wanted to see. In the vestibule, she stumbled against Abbé Moriceau and Fréchette's model. The street seemed to breathe people who came out of the houses, some in working clothes and bare-headed.

The bill-posters chose the spot, in the middle of the fence. Their trembling hands tore away the last shreds of the old hand-bills and this simple gesture was full of symbolic grandeur.

Now, it was done. Artisans, bourgeois, workmen, the professor, the artist, the priest, young women and old mothers, bright-faced girls and astonished children, all, citizens of France, watched the square white paper, so clean on the soiled background with fading letters. The placard, with its crossed flags and black letters, became a sign-post at the cross-roads of two epochs. It pointed to the blood-stained road of the future, and all eyes and thoughts turned towards this fragile thing that men saluted as if it were a flag.

No one spoke, or was able to speak. They had foreseen this moment. They had waited, for two days, but between what they imagined and what

they experienced, between moral certainty and the actual event, what an abyss!

War!

The placard did not contain this word, but all of its words formed one only, sinister and startling.

War!

The dull tocsin of agony rang to the rhythm of blood in the minds and the souls of the people. One of the little girls said, very low:

"Is it true that it is war?"

The older one replied:

"Yes. . . . We must go along!"

She dragged the chubby little girl from her playmate and squeezed her as if to protect her. Then an outburst of lamentations arose:

"Jean! My little Jean!"

An old woman was groaning in the group of women. Neighbors surrounded her. Fréchette's little mistress sobbed violently and ran towards the studio. The sculptor, before following her, said to the Abbé who was near him:

"We shall do beautiful, great things for

France, won't we, Monsieur? You, too, in your way. . . ."

The priest answered gently:

"In the same way as you, Monsieur. I am a soldier. I shall go to-morrow."

The old mason raised his clenched fist and brought it down as if he were trying to kill a harmful beast. A little pale, the young people tried to joke. The Alsatian locksmith, biting his brown moustache, declared:

"If my poor father could have seen this or known that it was coming, he would have died more happily. He is buried quite alone, in his own country."

"With the Boches?" asked a mason.

"Not with the Boches, in his own country, I tell you," answered the Alsatian, offended. . . . "At home, in Colmar."

"Well, old man, what your father did not know, you will have a chance to go and tell him. . . ."

XVII

SIMONE escaped from the house and the solitude where the misery of her own heart spoke too loudly. She crossed Paris on foot. Scenes on the way repeated everywhere, and faces which similar feelings marked with identical expression, were to remain with her as a strange memory, uncertain, like a memory of a world seen in the light of a nightmare. In the Place de l'Opera a human flood pushed her up on the steps of the theatre. The sky was livid, the air overheated and the houses grey and dull as on the previous evening. However, it was not the suffocating atmosphere of Friday. The crowd was still affected by the measure of stupor that follows a great shock, but there was also a sense of relief. There was no outward enthusiasm, no cries, nor songs, but also no sadness and at times the agitation of spirit was evident which is a forerunner of hope.

The windows of the building surrounding the

square, the balconies of the *Cercle Militaire* were black with people, pushing and leaning over them. Opposing eddies disturbed the surface of the crowd. The police tried paternally to direct the currents. The people applauded the procession spontaneously formed to march and salute the statue of Strasbourg, draped in black. They cheered the Garde Républicaine. They even cheered the autobuses as the conductors cried:

"It's our last trip; to-morrow the autobuses are going to war! Step lively, ladies and gentlemen! Hurry!"

A gamin called:

"*Montsouris-Opera-Berlin!* . . ."

In cabs and taxis, reservists who feared crowded trains went by to the stations. Others, carrying a knapsack or valise, waited for a vehicle. The public assisted, hailing chauffeurs, and even asking travellers to give up their places. The soldiers thanked them with a smile. Women offered them roses. One of the men gallantly kissed a beautiful girl, who returned his kiss. The crowd wished them good courage and good

luck. Grey-bearded men, of the campaign of 1870, said to them: "Fight hard. Avenge us. . . . Bring back Alsace and Lorraine! . . ." And the names of lost provinces, spoken so often, had a new sound and echoed profoundly in the memories of the French.

Simone saw flags flying in the distance. The national colors mingled with the colors of friendly nations. Several groups came in from the Place de la Concorde and she could distinguish, above the moving mass of heads, the traditional students' caps. Some of the young men were carried on the shoulders of their comrades. Their young faces beamed. A cheer went up. They said:

"It is a demonstration of the students and their foreign comrades are with them."

Simone remembered Pierre Anselme and had a pitying thought for the poor mother, so naïvely proud. . . . But she was moved by tenderness and was thrilled, and she understood that at this moment, individual love was being merged into one great affection. It stirred, this love, in the

hearts of beings united by race, tongue and the common heritage of an ancient glorious history, more closely united by the German menace and the defiance hurled at the enemy massed on the frontiers. Now, the forty millions of France formed one French family. Selfishness melted in the pure flame of universal sacrifice. Those remaining saw in those who went brothers and sons; and the tears in resigned eyes were shining with light.

Simone thought no more of Pierre Anselme and his mother; she did not even think of François. She became a tiny particle of France and felt a great longing to resist and endure. The desire for victory became at last part of the nature of the woman. She applauded with the crowd the unknown young men who marched by. How she wanted to press their hands, embrace them like a sister, and say to them: "Go joyously, you who die that France may live! This day is not sad. No day, since we were born, has dawned in greater beauty. The sky is grey, but behind the clouds, the sun shines. . . ."

She still applauded and did not know that she was crying.

Quietly and with solemnity a hymn was sung:

La Victoire, en chantant, nous ouvre la barrière,
La Liberté guide nos pas,
Et, du nord au midi, la trompette guerrière
A sonné l'heure des combats. . . .

Pictures flashed through their minds: The Revolution, the young volunteers, the army of Dumouriez in sabots, then, the poignant reality of the hour that the "trumpet of war" was blowing to the four corners of the French sky: The reapers leaving the August wheat, workmen leaving the factory, the marines rejoining the men of war, the leave-taking with sobs and kisses, the councils of the old, the courageous gayety of the young men, the last look behind at the village and the home. . . .

La République nous appelle. . . .

For almost all, the Republic, for all, France! How plainly they heard it, the voice of the na-

tion, as they listened to the words of the revolutionary song! And they heard the bells in all the bell-towers clanging to the sky; the drums of innumerable villages, the rumbling of cannon, footsteps on the roads, the clash of arms, the beating of hearts in unison, all the uproar made by an aroused people who did not want to die. Besides those who had gone at dawn, others would go during the night and still others would be going every instant for days and days. Hussars in uniforms blue as the flowers, dragoons with lances, active chasseurs, Alpines, colonials, artillerymen driving cannon like beasts of battle, red and blue infantry whose ranks waved on the march like living wheat; and the most like warriors of heroic ages, great cuirassiers clad in iron, with iron helmets under scarlet or red horsehair plumes, sitting stiffly on their heavy horses, sabres at their side, reins in hand, their young faces pressed by the chin-straps, riding, a compact and sonorous mass towards the rising sun. . . .

Regiment after regiment, all leaving, crowding the roads, filling the interminable trains, going

to form the first rampart of men to check the first shock of the enemy's attack. A tide of soldiers would soon overflow the country, extending northeast, without stop. Already, the first waves had advanced.

Simone found Jean Reynaud in the Rue du Rocher, in the white gallery with the green lattice-work. He went towards her with outstretched hands. . . .

"Good-morning, wisest of women! All the family is expecting you. Come and show Nicolette the face of a French woman who does not cry. . . ."

Very tall, very thin, with long legs, his hair brushed flat on his forehead, he had the aristocratic insolence of thoroughbred animals. He himself was proud of being "as thin and disdainful as a greyhound."

"I am not the wisest of women, but you are the most foolish of men. What kept you at Pontresina?"

"No telegram reached me. I left, with all the

other French people, when the newspapers gave us the alarm, and I had a strange journey. Monday, I shall rejoin my regiment of dragoons, at Versailles. I am enraptured."

"That is easy to see. And Nicolette?"

"Ah! Nicolette! . . . Before her, I put out my torches and muffle my flourish of trumpets. You will find her in the grey salon, with Maxime and my parents. My mother is admirable. Not a complaint! A Catholic and Parisian Cornelia. I am very proud of her and I think that she will be proud of her sons. Papa is more affected. It is true that Mamma has just returned from Notre-Dame-des-Victoires where two candles are burning now, one for Maxime, the other for me. Do you believe in the virtue of candles, Simone?"

"I believe in the goodness of your mother and in her great love which is worthy of being heard by God. I do not have candles burned, but I love the little lights that comfort sad hearts."

"Mamma is about to convert Nicolette, or rather to lead her back to religion, and you will see that after I go, they will forgive their mutual

grievances and go to the churches together. . . . Papa will oppose it. . . . As for Maxime, he has canonised Jaurès. Each one serves the God that speaks to his heart."

He had taken Simone's arm familiarly and both went down the long gallery, with the black-and-white pavement. Simone thought of the inauguration fête, given in the month of April of this same year, of which the illustrated papers had published colored photographs. She recalled the bright oranges hanging in the trimmed shrubbery, the amber and gold grapes, with reddened leaves, festooning the arches of the trellis, and the yellow and grey salon, a little odd, and amusing as the decorations of the Theatre of Arts. The ornamental designs in the new style, the round roses and the baskets of fruit, were repeated in the fabrics, on the backs of the seats and on the light frieze of the ceiling. A concealed orchestra played a jerky and languid dance. The couples drew nearer, arms stretched out, following the music. Young men with very smooth hair and young women bare under soft draperies and pre-

cious stones, crowned with aigrettes and more brilliant than birds of paradise, represented Parisian society, the scandal of moralists, charming in its corruption; in love with luxury and pleasure, artistic and fastidious even in the unbridled extravagances of its sensuality. They were dancing "over the volcano"—the famous volcano supposed to be extinct since 1870! . . . Simone thought of this picture, now almost belonging to the past. In a few years it would be an interesting historical memory; Paris "before the war." . . .

"How many of the slender young men who danced the tango would ever come here again? How many of the women would be wrapped in crêpe?"

She looked at Jean and a feeling of apprehension like a dark presentiment seized her. Why, in great danger, do certain people seem fated in advance? She pressed lightly on the arm that held her own.

"Jean, you will be very brave, I know. Prom-

ise that you will not be foolhardy? You are over-excited, imaginative. . . ."

"Thank you for your compliments, cousin! . . . I realize that you are moved by a solicitude that does me honor, but please do not spoil my pleasure. Mamma has already proposed miraculous medals to me and bullet-proof woolen vests. My brother offers me litres of tincture of iodine and opium pills. . . . Enough! Enough! I prefer death to ridicule."

In the grey salon, the maid brought a tray of tea. Nicolette rehearsed to her mother-in-law the pathetic adieus of the good German.

"Yes," said Jean, "the children have lost their 'guardian angel.' The spy has gone. . . ."

Maxime and Nicolette protested. They believed in Fräulein's honesty and would not allow themselves to be disturbed, they said, by romances and silly stories. Jean declared:

"All the Germans are spies. I believe in everything; in the fake advertisements, in the false Swiss, in treacherous governesses, in engineer spies. If fortune fails us, we shall see the broth-

ers of this good Lischen coming. They will know the contents of the cellar and of your jewel-box, Nicolette, and they will sleep in our beds."

Monsieur Louis Raynaud, an old man with bright eyes and forcible speech, wore in his buttonhole the green and black ribbon of the combatants of 1870. His emotion spent itself in nervous agitation and he blamed the government for permitting the Germans to invade France in the midst of peace. Then, Madame Raynaud, seated on a sofa between Pierre and Marianne, recalled that she had prophesied all these misfortunes.

"In my time, we did not confide our children to strangers, we watched our servants, we . . ."

She realised that she was offending her daughter-in-law and in a kinder tone, without finishing the sentence, she added:

"I know very well that customs change with the years. It is excusable to be influenced by this."

The old lady, intelligent, energetic and very pious, had all the virtues of the bourgeoisie, but

also the prejudices. Of her faded beauty she kept a majestic carriage, and in her pale plump face the eyes still liquid were not always considerate. She hated innovations of every kind and jeered at them with an animosity often cruel. Loving the husband who adored her, she preferred her sons to him and Jean to Maxime. Her real affection for the little children justified to her conscience the harshness she showed towards her son's wife. Nicolette bore it with an impatient, praiseworthy deference. There had been many strains between them and there had been friction between the sons and the father. The Raynaud family lived, like most modern families, in a state of "armed peace." The same spirit of independence made the children oppose the parents, the husband his wife, and even affected the brothers, although Maxime was, of all the Raynauds, the most conciliatory.

But on this evening of August the first, the discussion was only a means of escaping tenderness, of diverting the current of emotion, of "saving their face." Monsieur Louis Raynaud deplored

the dismantling of the fortresses in the north and feared an invasion of Belgium; the doctor estimated the strength of the reserves; Jean dreamed of a successful offensive; Nicolette wanted a position as nurse in a hospital; Madame Louis Raynaud was sure that irreligious France would be regenerated by suffering. And all of them, in speaking, had in their voices a tender and almost broken inflection contrasting with their words. A feeling of kindness and gentleness, almost of contrition, stirred those who knew that they were together perhaps for the last time. They did not allow the scene to become tragic. There were no tears nor phrases. They were French and were as reserved in their tenderness as in their heroism.

Le Temps was brought in and Monsieur Louis Raynaud read the latest news aloud: The visit of the German Ambassador to the Quai d'Orsay, the conversation of Monsieur Klobukowski with Monsieur Davignon and the reputed assurance of the ministry that France, faithful to its earlier pledges, would respect the neutrality of Belgium, but the decree of mobilisation was not in the five

o'clock edition and therefore the four large pages seemed empty.

The day was declining. Nicolette, without paint or powder, her eyes burning, went to sit by Simone who gently took her hand.

"Be brave!" she said, very low. "You are not the only one to suffer, my poor Nicolette. . . . I too . . ."

"Yes, we are all suffering, but not in the same way," replied Madame Raynaud. "Your heart is tortured and yet you remain calm, and your sorrow is without bitterness. You have not bungled your life! You have not squandered your youth! If your love is broken, it has given you everything, at least, all its sweetness, all its joys. . . . It has left you the memory of a perfect and pure beauty. . . . Others have not had this luck, Simone! . . . Others feel, before the danger, the price of lost days. Alas! We did not know our own souls, we did not have time to understand them! We did not realise that we might have been happy, so happy, and that underneath in the midst of the little quarrels and daily misun-

derstandings, we really loved with all our hearts!"

"Since we know it now, we must not forget it. . . Trust in the future, my Nicolette! . . ."

Madame Raynaud shook her head:

"The future! . . . Can you say that word to-day?"

"I wish to speak it! I wish to perform this act of faith," said Simone. . . . "I have too much love not to hope. Yes, François will return. . . . I shall see him again. . . .

"Don't speak! Don't tempt misfortune!" cried Nicolette. . . .

She bit her lips to choke back the sobs.

"Ah! Simone, if you knew! . . . This morning when we saw each other again, the scene, the sad explanation! . . . I did not want to think which of us was responsible for our old misunderstandings; I was no longer proud and irritable. . . . The old-time love returned to my heart. . . . And he was moved too! . . . But he goes day after to-morrow and the idea of war intoxicates him. What possesses the men? Is François the same? Did you see that he is glad to go?"

"But Nicolette, have you thought how you would feel if Jean went reluctantly? Their enthusiasm hurts us, but we enjoy it and are proud of them."

Jean approached the two cousins:

"What are you plotting by yourselves?" he said. "I am afraid that my wife may not be a Spartan wife. You have a red nose, Nicolette! Hou! Naughty child! Have some pluck, for goodness' sake! You owe me that! I want to take to war the memory of a pretty woman."

"Take my place," said Simone, moving away a little, "and comfort this poor child. She loves you more than you deserve to be loved."

Jean only kissed the hand of his wife silently. Madame Louis Raynaud sighed:

"What sacrifices God demands of us! I am not a very old person and yet I have seen two wars, and twice I shall have given all that I love best in the world; in 1870, my fiancé; in 1914, my children. I have endured the first test, and, God willing, I shall bear the second. . . . Listen, young women! Your hearts are not more torn

than mine, but I am determined not to break down. My sons must find me alive when they return. . . ." She added: "Because they will return, as their father did."

Monsieur Raynaud admired the vigor of his old wife and did not dare to show his secret emotion. Because he had seen the old war he foresaw the horror of the new, scientifically planned for and executed at the price of millions of men. And then having known defeat, he had the slightly humiliating fear of possible disaster. He had heard it said for so long that France was wholly decadent, that anti-militarism was consuming the army, that the rich bourgeois thought only of pleasure and the people only of class struggles. No doubt, there would be an awakening of the nation, but if fortune turned against it, at the beginning, if the war was not ended in three months, must it not fear the worst disaster?

The placidity of his sons disconcerted him. He blamed their youth and inexperience, and as he was a true French father, not solemn, and very tender, he had a great desire to cry, but

refrained for the sake of appearances and thought:

"My poor country! My poor children! . . ."

Jean declared that he would kill many Boches and Madame Raynaud privately thanked God that Maxime would be a doctor. Many mothers would owe the lives of their sons to him!

The brothers Gardave arrived a little late. Lucien was ridiculously happy. The night before, without waiting any longer, he had telegraphed his father to ask his permission to enlist and had received a favorable answer.

"Bravo!" said Jean. "It was fine for you to do that! You are a dandy boy!"

Bertrand recounted his impressions of the day. He spoke especially to Madame Davesnes, but she listened absent-mindedly. In the middle of a sentence, she interrupted:

"I think that I hear François. . . . At last!"

She rose to her feet, and as her husband entered the room, where the light was fading, he saw her first, and spoke to her first:

"Well! It is settled! I am going to-morrow. . . ."

XVIII

THE dinner was painful for every one. The old Raynauds made the best of it, but it was easy to see that they were exhausted. Nicolette was absorbed in her passionate, dumb grief. Simone and François, eager to be alone, distractedly exchanged glances. Bertrand de Gardave thought of his mother and his sisters crying in the poor castle in Périgord. . . . He dreamed of the little hills full of hollow grottoes, of the chestnut groves and of the clear and rushing Dordogne. . . . Would he ever return to his dear province? . . . Already, he had offered the sacrifice of his life in the chapel of Saint-Jacques-du-Haut-Pas which he had entered for a moment's meditation among the Jansenist shadows and the damp ashes of the great past. His brother smiled and talked, not at all disturbed, with a charming Gascon vivacity. This gaiety on the part of Lucien saddened the women. They

admitted the duty and peril for the men, but this little one, this child so fresh and young, who had not tasted life, with the last maternal caresses still upon him, this little one, they would have spared. . . .

The blue light of evening, through the open window, yellowed the glow of the electric light. A basket of red roses sprayed over the tablecloth like a pool of blood, and the perfume, in the heavy air, seemed funereal. . . .

At times, there was silence, and the lines in the faces no longer controlled by alert will power became relaxed and aged, all at once.

Jean tried to revive the conversation. He described his stay in Pontresina, in a cosmopolitan hotel, where, until Wednesday, July 29th, people did not speak of France except to comment unpleasantly on the incidents of the Caillaux trial. No one expected the war, but when they saw the notice posted in the Kursaal announcing the bombardment of Belgrade, they realised that a critical moment was approaching. Immediately, the tourists grouped themselves ac-

cording to nationalities, because of the need of drawing closer together to withstand opposing and already hostile groups.

A large number of Germans watched the French, who affected indifference. Bridge tables were deserted and the uneasy women no longer left their own countrymen.

Thursday evening there was a fresh despatch, in German. *"There has been no further ultimatum addressed by Germany to Russia, but there is little hope of maintaining peace. . . ."* This time the shock was great. . . . A Frenchman declared, in a loud voice: "France does not permit any one to send her an ultimatum." The others approved before the German officers. Immediately they all made plans for the journey. They rushed to the hotel office, and there, during quite a long wait, Germans and French, side by side, seemed more at ease, because everything had become *sincere*. The masks fell. They were able to speak at last with great mutual courtesy. The Germans were sure of themselves. . . . Evidently, the cause of the war—the French said, the

pretext—is absurd, but it would be interesting to fight. They were able to compare the artillery of the two countries and the respective merits of of the "75" guns and heavy cannon. . . . The conversation relieved the tedium of waiting. . . . But the Friday following, everything was changed. The veneer of politeness had cracked. The Germans emphasised their military conventions: their relations were modified according to their rank; one could see who gave way to the others and who ignored the rest, the vulgar herd of inferiors. They commented on the news, violently. . . .

And in the train, between the Engadine and Basle, they did not conceal their aggressiveness. When the Swiss employés did not attend to their demands satisfactorily, they announced: "You will pay up for this, next year, when Switzerland will be German. . . ." With us, they were quieter. There was a certain timidity in their insolence. . . . Moreover, they were convinced that France was rotten. . . . One of them, a colonel, said to me: "Still, apparently your

army has made some progress. . . ." I assured him that he would shortly realise it. Then, after a little silence: . . . "What can we do about it?" he said, "war is a scourge, but we need colonies."

"Let them come and take them!" exclaimed Lucien de Gardave. "The thieves, the bandits the . . ."

The terrible denunciation he could not control made every one laugh. His handsome rosy cheeks grew purple.

"Out of the mouths of babes we hear the truth," said François.

Monsieur Raynaud shook his white head.

"Are we ready? That is the question."

"Our spirits are ready," replied Bertrand.

"That is not enough, my friend. We must have cannon, guns, ammunition and a scientific commissary department. . . . If you had only seen 1870! . . ."

François said that one could not compare France at the end of the Empire with the France which, for several years, had proudly risen again and felt her old vigor returning to her younger

members. Bertrand de Gardave had expressed it exactly: their spirits were ready.

"We do not make war with our spirits."

"But, without them, war leads to disaster. In 1870, all the nation did not rally to the flag; opinions did not agree; faith was lacking. Certainly, our organisation is better than it was, although it may still be inferior to the German organisation. . . . Fortunately, the French genius is capable of marvellous inventions. . . ."

"You are confident?" demanded the old man.

"Absolutely confident."

François repeated the surprise he had had in the evidence of the sincere patriotism of his workmen.

He had heard of the mobilisation at five o'clock, from a factory gatekeeper who had seen the official telegram displayed in the post-office. In the nearly dark office, where they had gathered around the directors, the head men and the engineers looked at each other in silence. . . . Very simply, in the quiet of the almost deserted building, they had taken leave of each other. . . . A hand grasp,

a wish of good luck. . . . No conversation. . . . Each one had gone to the pay-office and the employés, from the humblest whom François had never seen, were come spontaneously to say "good-by" to him. This sympathy had touched him.

"In returning to the station I was almost alone. I looked at the darkened façade, a bit of the canal reflecting the sky, the things I had seen every evening for two years, and which had meant to me the close of daily work, liberty, the first stage of return home . . . I thought: 'When shall I see it again? . . .' The station was quiet. The Zouaves mounted guard on the bridge. The train arrived. In my car there were two young men and a little dressmaker who was very anxious to explain to her parents the lark she had had all the afternoon with the aforesaid lads. For them the war did not yet exist. . . . Often, the train stopped, leaving the line free for other trains going towards the points of concentration. At last, I arrived in Paris, very late. I was struck by the look of the streets: no gaiety, no enthusiasm, no dejection, but movement

and action, and, in the crowd were officers in service outfits, a blanket over their shoulders. On the Pont de l'Europe, I stopped a moment to look at the interior of the Saint-Lazare station. From that point, slightly elevated, from which the streets appeared to descend, I suddenly had the sense of a great change. . . . Paris was no longer the Paris I had left in the morning. . . . All of her complex life, divided into thousands and thousands of interests, had now but one mind and one object. . . . Then, I was seized with a sort of intoxication, in which there was neither pleasure nor trouble, not even enthusiasm, but much more than emotion: an intoxication affecting my brain and not my nerves and yet exciting my breast. I was actually drunk with the idea that I was living through a unique evening, greater than all of the evenings experienced since my birth, and which would not have its like in all the evenings to come until my death. . . . And then, I thought of nothing but you, my friends, and of Simone and I hurried to this house like a schoolboy . . ."

"Well!" said Jean, "hearing of the mobilisation through the noises in the street, did not give me the shock I had last night on the frontier, when they said: 'The Germans have held up the French locomotives in Alsace,' and especially when I saw this morning, the first French sentinel near a viaduct. The silhouette, the military attitude, and the sharp outline of the bayonet against the blue of the dawn! It was beautiful enough to make one weep! And the trains of reservists passing, the soldiers at the car doors, the serene energy of these men who did not sing! . . . Often the mobilised men, going to their depot, delayed our train. They were men from the East. They excused themselves for inconveniencing us a little. They were calm. One of them said: 'The Boches have tormented us for a long time, Monsieur. . . . It must stop. We understand that it must stop. . . . Our children must have peace. . . . For us, the worst is behind us. We have left our home. Now, we are not thinking any more about it. . . . It is true, isn't it, that the government will not let our families die?' Others looked at

the country, the ripe wheat, the woods veiled in a thin mist. . . . They noticed, no doubt for the first time, the beauty of the country-side. . . . 'All the same, it would be dreadful to let the swine spoil our beautiful France.' I repeat the phrase exactly. Never has a burst of academic eloquence given me more pleasure than this phrase."

After dinner, the old Raynauds went home. Jean and Nicolette were to spend the next day with them. Then, the Gardave brothers wished to go in their turn.

Bertrand pressed his lips to Simone's hand.

"I do not know whether we shall see each other again, Madame, but I shall think of you, in trying hours, because you have helped me to understand and to love France. . . . Does that surprise you? . . . Oh! It is very simple. . . . But I have not the right to explain myself further. Believe me, and do not forget me entirely."

He admired the blonde hair, the fine features, the intelligent eyes, shading blue and grey like the

Seine under the changeable sky of Paris, the tender smile and the quiet grace and air of passion and of modesty, making him think of the princesses of Racine. In a flash, he imagined this woman attacked by the enemy—and he knew that he would gladly die to defend her.

"Farewell, Madame!"

"Until me meet again, Bertrand!"

That was all. When the two young men had gone, François and Simone spoke of leaving, but Nicolette begged them to wait five minutes. She was going upstairs on account of the children, and she would come back. . . .

Maxime took François to the smoking-room to give him some practical advice, and write a prescription. Simone and Jean remained alone.

Nicolette's husband then said:

"I have a request to make of you, my little cousin, and perhaps I may not have another chance to speak to you frankly. It is this: I confide Nicollete to you. It is not a question of the children. My brother will be happy to interest himself in them. But, for Nicolette, neither he

nor my parents nor my mother-in-law are able to do anything. You alone can do much. . . . Promise me then to love this poor woman, like a real sister."

"I promise you, Jean, but why? . . ."

"Because your promise will lighten my remorse a little. . . . You know, Nicolette has not been very happy. I feel myself responsible for the disillusion that has come to her in marriage—and even for what has come to me in the same way. . . . I was mistaken in supposing that I could make a good husband and father of a family. . . ."

"Oh! Jean, if you desire it seriously, after the war, you can regain your happiness. It is cracked; it is not broken. . . ."

"Alas! I should not repair this precious porcelain. . . . What happens in novels, my dear Simone, is exceptional in life. . . . I shall not suddenly acquire all the domestic virtues because I have risked my life. . . . My act would have to be a sacrifice. But whatever happens no one owes me either admiration or pity. . . . Open

your beautiful eyes wide! . . . Shake your head. It is so. . . . I regret nothing, absolutely nothing. The life I have lived has been vain and absurd. I have a taste for risk and adventure. . . . Suddenly, adventure offers itself to me—the most splendid of all! I am happy, I feel myself free and young, and I go to war as I would to an adventure in love. . . . Yes, I shall fight for France and also for pleasure. . . . There is an immense egoism in my courage. . . ."

"Poor Nicolette!" said Simone, softly. . . . "How I pity her!"

In the smoking-room, Maxime whispered. Simone overheard occasional words.

"If you are wounded in the chest. . . ."

Jean wanted to kiss her hand as a sign of gratitude. He felt sure that it was icy cold. . . .

XIX

THE Rue de Rome at night. The whistle of locomotives in the cutting seems to make the sky quiver as it is rent with flashes of still lightning. Simone and François, moved by the fraternal leave-taking of Maxime and of Jean, walk close together. Often, in dark places, they slacken their steps. Their lips meet in a profound kiss, where the trace of bitter tears still lingers! . . . They speak with difficulty. Simone thinks of trifling matters—that the key of François's canteen does not work well, and she remembers that the railway time-table is lost. . . .

"How will you be able to lunch *en route?* . . . Have you taken the prescription Maxime wrote for you? . . . You will telegraph me at once on arriving at Besançon?"

He replies no matter what. . . . She does not listen, for she is speaking to herself to divert her

thoughts. . . . And at times she shivers all over and sighs:

"Ah! God help me!"

"Simone! my beloved! . . ."

"If we could waken to-morrow and find that we had dreamed it all!"

"Be calm, dearest! . . . Dearest! . . . Put your cheek against my shoulder. . . . There. . . . Don't speak. . . . Let me lead you."

This distracted suffering raving at his side tortures François. He understands that the reaction is the result of the long strain of the day, and that Simone is paying the price of her courage. He admires her because she was able to control herself at the Raynauds'. Since they have been alone, outside, she has become nervously unstrung.

He does not know the exact hour of the morning train. Simone asserts:

"The summer express goes about eleven o'clock. . . ."

He is doubtful about it, and when they reach the Place du Havre, he suggests that they should go into a café to consult a time-table. In the

brighter light, in the presence of others, Simone recovers herself. . . . She searches the pages herself. . . . She was mistaken.

"The express leaves for Dijon at nine o'clock, where it waits to make connections."

"Very well! I shall go at nine o'clock. . . ."

"Why not to-morrow evening?"

"But I am not at liberty to choose my train. . . . It is not a pleasure trip that I am undertaking. . . ."

She makes no protest. He takes her through the streets. People read the proclamation of the Municipal Council. They speak louder and more freely than on the previous evening. Many Parisians are going hastily in search of friends whose arrangements for military service they do not know exactly and who may easily be leaving the next day. There are families dragging their sleepy or excited children, and lovers clinging together and kissing. During the day, the men have lived intensely, virily, with all their fighting energies. During this supreme night now beginning, they are going to live as lovers, as husbands, with

all the power of the heart and flesh. Night gives them back to woman. . . .

There is no brutality in the ardor burning in their blood. Almost always tenderness has a part in it. Handsome couples become pathetic partly because of their beauty. And others, without charm and without elegance, are no less touching. Worn-out wives, husbands with ordinary faces, hold each other awkwardly by the arm, and commonplace among the commonplace, are raised above themselves by the sacred emotion of the moment. The shadow of hovering death ennobles their humility. They revive caresses forgotten since their honey-moon. The child is with them, but this evening the child no longer belongs to its mother. If they are walking, the father holds it by the hand; if it is too small to walk, the father carries it on his free arm, against his heart. The instinct of perpetuity cheers him and the soldier going to fight, certain of not dying wholly, consoles himself because his descendants will not know war.

The families separate themselves in the crowd,

the father, mother and little ones, huddled in an isolated group. In the same way birds seek their nest together when a hawk threatens to attack them.

The wide avenue was bathed in night. The gas of the street lamps gave to the plane trees behind them a hard artificial green, making the deserted sidewalks seem more desolate. Not a soul was in the little street. Madame Anselme's door was half open under the ruddy light of the lamp. The black velvety cats crept along craftily.

Simone whispered:

"Do you remember our return last winter, the dry cold stinging my eyes, and how I held your hand in my muff? . . . You said 'We shall be comfortable, very soon. . . .' and you took off my wraps yourself. . . . It is ended, our joy, ended for a long time. . . . To-morrow evening, I shall come back alone, I shall pass here where we are walking, quite alone. . . ."

"Don't say that," he said. "Don't take away

my strength. You will never know what it costs me."

At home, in the vestibule, they clung together and without separating went to their room. The globe in the ceiling, covered with flowered material, lighted them and in the faint glow the objects seemed filled with intimate poetry. A welcome emanated from them like a perfume. How charming the old cotton prints were with their blue country scenes and their temples, colonnades and sheep folds arranged on a creamy white background! How friendly it was, the nut-brown furniture, with its glossy leather in leafy patterns. On the night-table, Marie had put the lamp with the bent standard, a water-bottle, and some books. And she had laid Simone's long filmy gown on the folded point of the turned-down bedclothes. Delightful lover's room, too small now for a cradle, but soon to seem so vast and empty! . . .

Both of them, overcome by the same regret, thought with silent dismay of the indefinite series of future evenings, such solitary evenings!

All at once, a little clock struck and Simone cried suddenly: "Eleven o'clock!"

Was it possible? They had only eight hours more to be together, before the departure of François! And nothing was ready for him!

He said that he must write some letters, confirming certain arrangements he had made for Simone's sake, because one never knows what may happen. . . ."

She turned pale, "One never knows what may happen! . . . Alas! One knows only too well, now!"

She went to get François's canteen and brought it back to the room. It was an old one with a poor fastening, which François on leaving the service had not wanted to replace. Then, in the bottom of a chest they found the old uniforms carefully folded and packed in camphor.

"We'll leave the windows open," said Simone. "The odor will quickly evaporate."

On the lounge, on the arm-chairs, she spread out the dark military clothes, trimmed with red bands. She was astounded because they seemed

heavy in her hands. She was hardly able to unfold the thick, stiff cloak!

"Do you think that you will wear it again, François? Do you remember that you looked at it regretfully, when you helped me fold it to crowd it into the box two years ago?"

"It is an old servant and has weathered many storms! We pushed it into retirement too quickly, but it is like me, still good for active service. . . ."

While the young wife ransacked the wardrobe, François seated himself at his desk. From time to time Simone went to him. She consulted him: Where should she put this thing? . . . What should she do with the others?

"I do not find your field-glasses."

"In the cupboard, on the third shelf, with the revolver. . . . My sabre is below. . . ."

He continued writing. Simone went away slowly without taking her eyes from his beloved form, his head covered with rough hair, his profile clean-cut as bronze. When François had finished writing, he called her to him. He gave her an

account-book, letters, a list of necessary shopping for her to do, a small sum of gold he had collected and the key of his private drawer. And steadily, with the precision which was a part of all the acts of his life, he gave her advice. The war might be long. . . . She must resist the demoralising influences of solitude and revery; she must act, working for herself and for others. . . . In the hospitals or in relief work, which would increase, a woman like Simone could find opportunities for usefulness. . . . He took her on his knees and felt her tremble all over, fragile and ardent, her head turned away, choked with sighs. A delicate perfume emanated from her skin, her dress and her ashen hair. Under the fabrics, her exquisite form moved gracefully. François thought of the hours he had held her in this way and the rapture of their mutual joy and the bonds joining them together, ties of devotion and tenderness, of passion and of pleasure, bonds which custom had strengthened instead of weakening. Simone was his companion and his friend, but she was also his sweetheart. She was a part of him-

self, like the power by which he moved, like the marrow of his bones and the blood of his heart.

She did not know, the well-beloved, through what alternations of courage and of weakness he had passed; he, the apparently imperturbable stoic!

She did not know that he was consumed with anxiety over leaving her in this way, and that out there where his duty called him, he would know all the tortures of solicitous homesickness. She did not know that for this soldier ready to die and die nobly, the sacrifice represented a superhuman effort. And she never would know. She would never be able to realise the suffering of him who refused even in the emotion of their parting, to weaken her or himself.

She listened, pressed to his heart and she remembered. She recalled the years of her sad childhood, her dreary and limited youth, and then the beautiful golden autumn when she had finally begun to live; she saw once more the walk in the park, the bench under the elm, and François beside her, while the friendly twilight concealed

their first kiss. And she remembered also the little apartment which she had found on their return from the wedding journey, partly furnished and in absurd disorder. She could hear François saying as they entered:

"Unhappiness will never enter here through my fault."

Their love had been so simple, so brave in the face of life, so pure even in its fervor! Simone and François loved as one breathes, from vital necessity. Nature and chance had created in them one of those unions rarely experienced by human beings, so rarely that the majority of men speak of them with a touch of irony, concealing under a mask of scepticism a regret they do not confess. And this love, this beautiful innocent thing, spreading joy everywhere by its mere existence, might be destroyed, like so many other joys, easily or with difficulty produced by the unconquerable patience of women. Happiness of old mothers leaning on their sons, happiness of young mothers bending over the cradles of their babies, happiness of married couples, happiness of lovers, poor

nests now to be overturned by the storm and trampled on by the horde. . . . And why. . . . Why should men, their short lives threatened by a thousand evils, enrage each other, instead of helping to make life better for every one? Why should the ferocious pride and cupidity of a people bring them to universal butchery? Why was this crime not punished by Eternal Justice as soon as it was conceived in any mind, as soon as any will prepared to execute it? If it were accomplished to the very end, to the ruin of France, in a flood of fire and blood, would it not mean the failure of all morality, of all religion, of the great struggle for the good that humanity has been laboriously making for centuries?

These thoughts made Simone almost cry out with despair! But she clenched her delicate fingers and bit her lips. A fury seized her, mingled with her woman's grief, a powerless rage she had never known until this night. Her soul, not formed for hatred, was learning to hate. . . . She wished that a catastrophe would entirely annihilate Germany; she called down death on the

Kaiser and every one belonging to him, and, shrinking with agony before the future, she took refuge on the strong heart of the being she cherished, who was still with her for a little while, for half a night.

She whispered:

"I have only you!"

It was true. Other women had parents, children, sisters and brothers. . . . Simone was alone in the world as François was alone!

"I have nothing but you! . . . I have nothing but you! . . ." She repeated in a kind of delirium. . . .

He tried to quiet her. But when he wanted to explain to her the arrangements he had made, and how she might live "In case of misfortune" she smothered him with a caress. . . .

"No! I do not care to hear you. . . ."

"But it is necessary."

"No! . . . No! . . ." she cried, sobbing. "No! I do not wish it. . . . You imagine that I would survive you? . . . Do you not love as I love? . . . I let you go, I give you to France, but if I

lose you, I shall not need to sigh for death. . . ."

From what depths did this woman's cry arise! How she suffered, how the frail Simone, this tender Simone, this dear Simone would suffer, whom François would protect from sorrow, even at the price of martyrdom! Truly, he did not renounce for one second the old idea of honor which was for him instinctive; his will did not waver a second! he did not cease to be himself, but his lacerated feelings uttered a secret moan. . . . He experienced in a wave of emotion all the terrors of separation and death, and pressing the adored form to him he cried, he too, without shame, a man's tears, rare and slow, flowing with difficulty and giving greater evidence of suffering than the blood flowing from a wound.

XX

HE slept now, broken, on Simone's breast, between her arms, beneath her hair.

A rumble, a heavy clasp, then a tremendous crash made the heavens resound. The phosphorescence cast a blue light on the shades. The storm, after threatening for three days, broke forth at last. Flashes of lightning crossed over Paris. . . . François trembled in his sleep. Did he dream of attacking armies? Did he hear the cannon roar? Simone laid her hand on his feverish forehead where his thought vaguely kept vigil.

"Sleep, my beloved! . . . Sleep! . . . Forget!"

She did not forget, and thinking of the sad happiness that they had drained to its last dregs, she said to herself that in all of the homes in innumerable towns, men and women loved each other, intoxicated with tears and caresses, during the stormy night. This din of thunder in the heavens, a bad omen, concealed,—so that the God

of pity might not hear—human sobs and tenderness. But love was preparing its retaliation. The web of life, about to break in so many places, renewed elsewhere the sacred fabric of the future. From these farewells, a whole race would be born, and France of the future renewed.

Strangely calm, Simone looked at François. She did not cry any more; she had passed beyond that stage of revolt and of despair, and reached the depth of supreme suffering where serenity is found. Motionless, she heard the quick sounds of thunder grow more distant. The darkness faded. The sparrows in the chestnuts saluted the dawn.

The dawn came and the sun threw a thin arrow of gold through the crack in the blinds. Blue swains, under blue porticoes, arranged themselves in a pattern with their flutes and their garlands. Outside, a cart rattled in a silence like Sunday morning and the bells rang for the first mass.

Simone kissed François's eyes to waken him, that the terrible day might begin happily. They had begun, in this way, for two years, all the joy-

ous days of their lives. And in a voice that did not tremble, she said:

"My beloved, the hour has come."

For the last time, she arranged her husband's garments herself; for the last time she served the tea in the tiny dining-room. . . . What meaning was given to the smallest acts, what tenderness was connected with the most ordinary objects! All the house seemed a living thing that in some unknown way suffered in sympathy with those who lived in it. François looked at the slight crack in the cup, a cloth Simone had embroidered, a faded bouquet he had bought two evenings before, the books lying about, the play of a sunbeam in a mirror, a small defect in the wall-paper, the nothings—the nothings that recall everything, when they are remembered far away. . . .

He thought:

"My home! . . . My wife! . . ."

All of his worldly possessions, all of his reasons for living were contained in those four words! But he accepted the great reason for dying, tearing him from Simone and from his hearth.

He already saw them only as a small speck in the new world he was entering, where he himself was only a soldier, lost among millions of soldiers. His individual existence had become entirely negligible. He renounced it without effort, with a fierce joy, although the torture of the separation remained. But this torture affected only his heart and flesh. It did not touch his will, wholly satisfied, perfectly calm, in the midst of the worst troubles.

He was also strengthened because of Simone's attitude, which no longer betrayed any weakness.

She was very solicitous about the carriage which would be difficult to get, and because Marie Pourat was late. Then François proposed that they should go to the Avenue for an auto or an ordinary cab, which they could keep waiting for them. They went out together. The air had cleared. A lavender and golden light, the misty light which floats like crayon dust over Paris in the early morning, caressed the little street. There were no more masons in the stoneyard; no employées nor dressmakers were going toward the

neighboring subway station. They certainly felt, in spite of all, that the day was a Sunday and they met women with new hats going to church. The Gouge grocery was open, but Madame Anselme's shop was closed.

On the Avenue, François stopped a newsboy. The paper he bought had a final paragraph:

"*Germany has declared war on Russia.*"

The news was not unexpected, and the blow they had seen coming disconcerted no one. After the great shock of the mobilisation, the nerves of the French were sufficiently braced to endure, without giving way, any subsequent shocks. Simone only said:

"Our turn will come soon."

As they walked, her eyes ran over the pages unfolded by François. . . . Message of the President of the Republic to the French nation. . . . Appeal of the Municipal Council to the people of Paris. . . . It is announced that the support of England has been acquired by France, "without arranging exactly the nature and form of the probable intervention. . . ."

"Well!" said François, smiling, "Gustave Hervé has asked to go 'in spite of his myopia and his forty-three years!' That will make our good neighbor Lepoultre reflect!"

Just then, the "good neighbor" passed them; he was with his son-in-law, Monsieur Delmotte, who exhibited proudly his stripes of Second-Lieutenant of engineers. A little farther away, Davesnes saw Alexandre Fréchette, carrying a canvas valise. He accompanied his little friend who bought cakes at a confectioner's and he looked for a cab in vain. Although he had never spoken to François Davesnes, he bowed cordially:

"Good luck, Lieutenant!"

François replied:

"Good luck!"

And other mobilised men of the district passed, whose faces were familiar. Abbé Moriceau, transformed into a sergeant, was with his mother in an old cab with a top railing. The Alsatian locksmith conducted his workmen, and the fifteen-year-old apprentice followed behind, very proud to carry the distended bag of his comrades. Made-

moiselle Florence, with reddened eyes, hung on the arm of her lover.

Simone could not take her eyes away from François. Pale and more slender in his uniform, he was truly a fine officer and he had the manner and bearing of one born to command. In the atmosphere of this morning, smelling of powder, Simone was elated with pride, the enthusiastic feeling of admiration added to love. The one she had loved and chosen was a real man! She remembered the men she had met at the Raynauds', ornaments of salons, politicians, athletes, men of money and of pleasure, poor puppets who would be quickly blown down by the wind of war! What was François Davesnes, even yesterday, to these persons? Neither celebrated nor rich, detesting talkativeness and bragging, what did he represent to those who did not know his soul and whom, moreover, he avoided with a quiet and courteous disdain? Now, in the test where all of his generation gave their utmost, he was precisely the Frenchman whom France in peril needed, energetic and modest, mastering the tenderest emotion

of his heart by rigid will power, profoundly human even in the violence of the strife, scorning words, knowing how to face all reality and ready for obscure sacrifice. Everywhere, he would find and keep the place due him: in the greatest danger and in the greatest honor.

After having walked about for some time, Simone and François finally discovered an automobile. The chauffeur agreed to drive them home, then to the Lyons station.

"It is because it is you, Lieutenant. To-day, there are no longer any cabs for civilians."

Marie Pourat had come in the absence of her employer. When she saw François, she began to cry. She did not think that Monsieur would go so soon! That Anthime of hers would not go until the fifth day. How empty it made all the houses, this departure of the men! And she asked insistently if Monsieur believed that the war would last a long time.

"Several months, perhaps."

"God preserve us! . . . What will happen to the rest of us! . . . To be sure, there will be

women who will die of grief, like this poor woman Anselme. . . ."

Simone exclaimed:

"Madame Anselme is dead!"

"Yes, Madame. She was too sensitive, that strong woman. Night before last she had an attack of vertigo, and her son begged them to hide the bad news from her. . . . He did not even tell her of the mobilisation. She suspected something. . . . It is difficult to deceive a mother! . . . She did not seem to notice anything, but last night, she got up and went to the shop for a paper . . . and suddenly she cried out. Her son reached her only in time to take her in his arms, quite rigid. . . . She died at daybreak. Monsieur Pierre should have gone this morning! He will ask a respite to bury his poor mother. . . . It is terrible!"

"Yes," said Simone, "it *is* terrible!"

She put her hand over her eyes, as if she had suddenly seen death face to face, death, about to be the fearful queen of the world, and which, stealthily, had come in the little peaceful street

of the suburbs to seize its first victim . . .

Marie Pourat mopped her eyes with the corner of her apron. She ended:

"There are plenty of mothers who would be jealous of an end like that, in such times."

Meanwhile, François hurried Simone. Even arriving at eight o'clock, he risked not having any place in the train.

Once more, he impressed upon his vision the blue room, the grey salon, the cherished objects, and pressing his wife to his heart, he said to her:

"Simone, whatever comes, we shall have known life in its best and most beautiful form. I have been happy through you, among all men. Tell me that you have been happy!"

"Ah! François!" . . .

The moments slipped by. He led her away. Marie had already taken the canteen to the cab. She handed the dressing-bag to Simone and the sword in its grey scabbard.

"That is all. . . . Good-bye, Madame! and good luck, Monsieur. May the good God send you back soon, after beating the Prussians!"

An automobile panted in the court of the house. Madame Miton came to speak to Monsieur Davesnes and to beg the chauffeur to hurry.

"Monsieur Mèlinier is going. . . . They say that he will take a general with him."

She sighed:

"All the tenants are going! There will be no one left here but their wives."

The taxicab started and the little street vanished behind Simone and François Davesnes, as if it had fallen into the past, with its small old houses, its new dwellings, and the fence with the advertisements, the chestnuts overhanging the garden wall and the clock-tower where the doves cooed. . . .

The sun emerged from the heavy fogs. When the automobile crossed Austerlitz Bridge, the tower of Notre Dame and the quays were outlined between the blue sky and the silver stream.

"How beautiful Paris is!" said François. "Dear Paris . . . with what affection we shall defend her!"

"You believe," said Simone, eagerly, "you be-

lieve in victory? Do you think that we who were born in a conquered country, shall see revenge, triumph, a new France, and that we shall not submit in vain to the martyrdom of this day? You go confidently? . . . You are certain, say that you are certain. . . ."

"I am sure that I shall do my whole duty, like the others, and I feel a great hope, if not a certainty. . . . Germany is strong! the struggle will be long and hard. . . . Never be a pessimist, whatever happens, my dearest, but keep your illusions. . . . Success will be painfully bought."

"The Russians will help us. . . . Perhaps the English. . . ."

"Perhaps. . . . But we must count on ourselves. . . . It is the people of France who will save France. . . ."

The automobile went slower.

An immense crowd overflowed the Rue de Lyon where the subway entrance poured out a torrent of men and women. Vehicles of all sorts, the most antiquated and the most bizarre, carried the mobilised men. All this crowd, barred at inter-

vals by police and soldiers, moved with one impulse in the same direction towards the station. There were many officers of all grades and ages, lieutenants of the territorials with grey hair, uncomfortable in the uniform that squeezed their stomachs, doctors and marines bound for their ships at Toulon. On the earth-works families of Italians, Croatians and Bohemians waited for the free trains reserved for foreigners and looked as if even the soil were bearing filth and misery. There were couples with children and young men with old mothers. The farewells of the night had reddened their eyes and lined their wan faces. Almost all of the women were crying, softly, with an air of asking forgiveness. . . . "Good-bye, little one! . . . May the good God protect you! . . . —Adieu, mamma! —Good-bye, wife and child! . . . Don't be afraid. We shall get them. —Good-bye! *Write* to us. . . . Don't take cold at night. . . . Don't lose your money! . . . Tender and familiar nicknames melted in a kiss. . . . But the scene was short and simple. The soldier passed the barrier; the mother, the wife or

the sweetheart, silent and staggering, turned back, and the people stepped aside before her.

A good-natured man took François's canteen. Pushing through the crowd, with difficulty, he reached the baggage room. But there were two lines of soldiers with imperative orders. "No women inside of the station, except travellers provided with tickets." François insisted in vain.

"Very well! wait for me outside," he said to Simone. "I shall leave the small packages with you and go to register my baggage. Watch my troublesome sword and my bag. . . . I shall come back. We can say good-bye in the court, my poor darling!"

She obeyed sadly, standing near the officer of the peace who guarded the passage. The soldiers looked at her with an amiable curiosity. At the end of a quarter of an hour, François had not returned. The military Cerberus observed the young woman. Was he moved by the distress in her eyes? He murmured:

"The Lieutenant cannot leave without his weapons? That would not be possible. . . . By